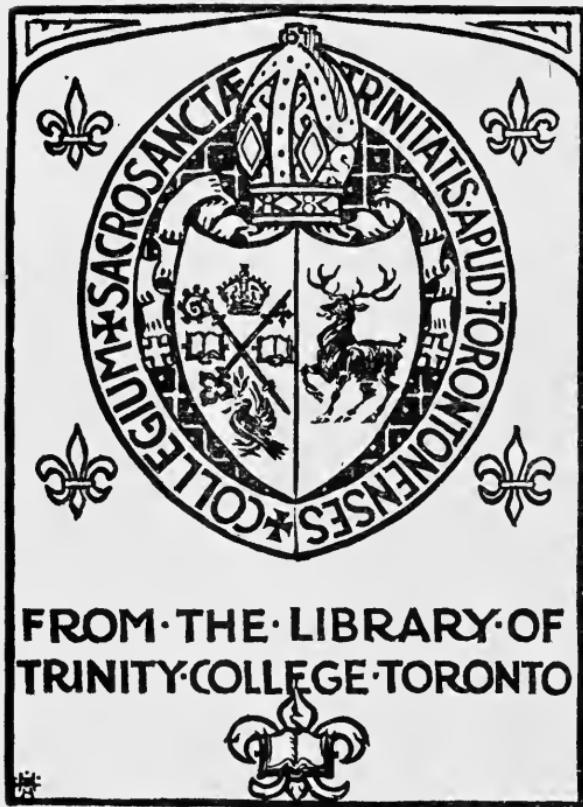


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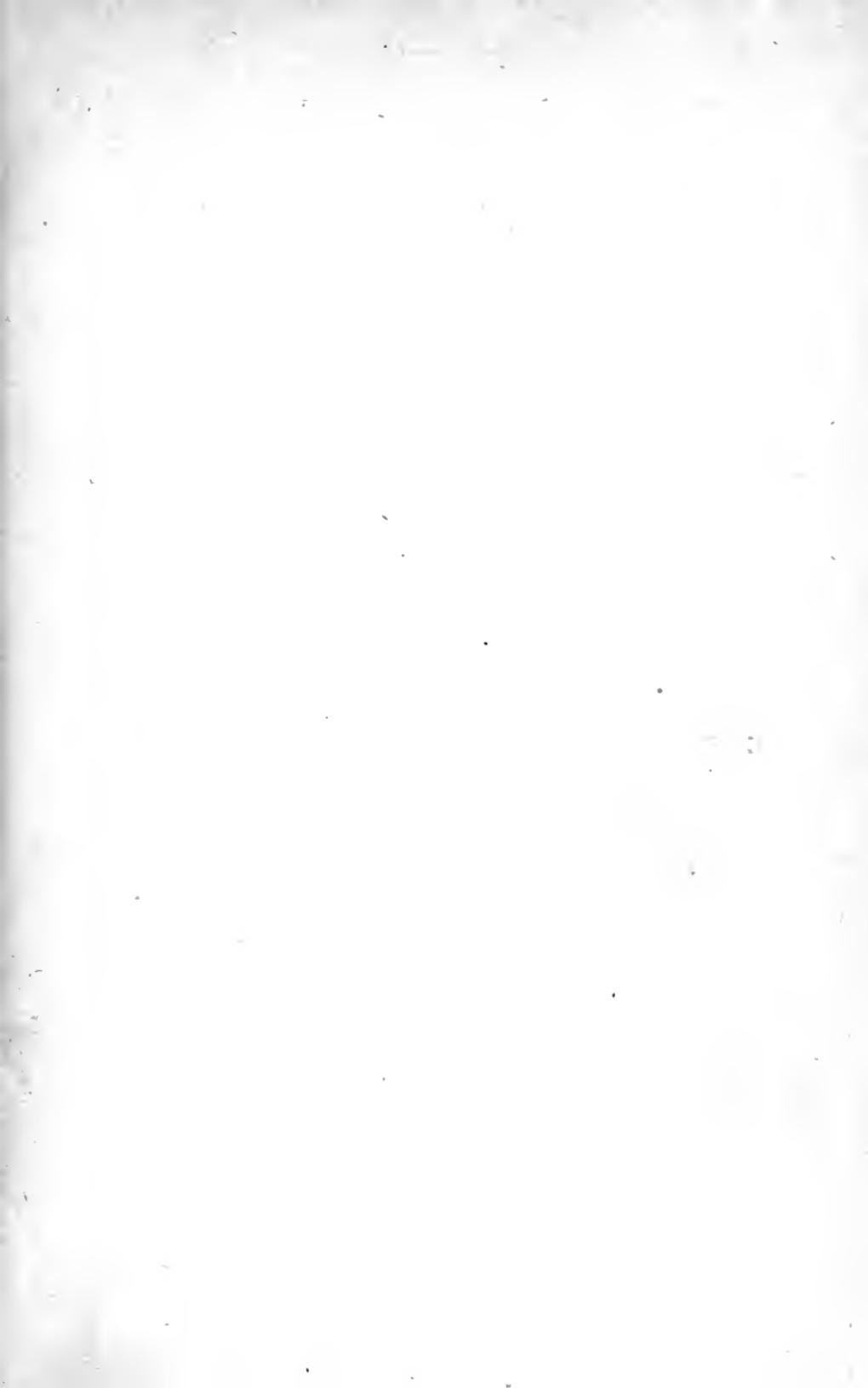


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THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN  
AND HIS WORK.



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# THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN AND HIS WORK.

SIX LECTURES ON PASTORAL THEOLOGY  
DELIVERED IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL,  
CAMBRIDGE, MAY TERM, 1889,

BY THE

REV. HERBERT JAMES, M.A.,  
RECTOR OF LIVERMERE, SUFFOLK,  
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London:  
MACMILLAN AND CO.  
AND NEW YORK.

1890

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Cambridge:  
PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A. AND SONS,  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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MAR 22 1985

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## 7

# LECTURE I.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN:—HIS FIELD.

*“Veni, Creator Spiritus.”*

I HAVE been asked to speak to you on the subject of Pastoral Work in the Country, in other words, on the Country Clergyman, and his Work.

It has been thought, and not without reason, that the towns have had their full share of attention throughout these Lectures on Pastoral Theology. For most assuredly the town clergyman of the present day, young or old, has no lack of external helps in the way of “Pastoralia.” These have been given in full measure from the lips, and hearts, and lives, of my predecessors. It may not even now be a fulness unto satiety, but there need be no complaint of starvation.

I am here then to contribute what I may towards making the scale even. Not indeed that there is any antagonism between the two great ministerial provinces. There may be differences of administration: there is

no conflict of principles. For the most part the two lie "in pari materia," so that the directions available in the one sphere are largely available in the other. Largely, I say, but not so entirely as to leave no room for a specific and particular handling of that other. Probably it will appear that there is more room than many think. And this must be my plea, if plea be needed, for sweeping past the towns, and pulling up, and detraining at the country stations.

One word as to the treatment of the subject. I wish that treatment to be as practical as possible. For the age with all its viewiness, its idealisms, and its illusions, has still some liking for the practical. And our work if it is to stand as spiritual work, must be intensely practical also.

I do not therefore propose to limit the field of view by the horizon of my own forty years of ministry, whatever the teachings of that may be. Seen as I see them, they serve more for personal humbling than pastoral helping. Such as they are, however, I give them to you. And with them I give what I have gathered and disposed of other men's stuff. I have walked with the teachers of the past, I have talked with the teachers of the present, and I have drawn largely on the experience of both for all that seemed to promise store of workable instruction for you, my brothers and fellow-labourers, present and to be, in the Country Parishes of our Land.

I shall hope to speak to you on the following lines :  
i. *The Country Clergyman and his Field*; ii. *His Preaching* ; iii. *His Visiting* ; iv. *His Educational Work* ; v. *His Parochial Organisation* ; vi. *His Influence* :

To day I would speak of

I. *The Field for the Labourer, and the Labourer for the Field.*

This Field is, for our present purpose, the aggregate of our Country Parishes. It consists of the districts and divisions which form the largest part of the map of England, with populations ranging from 1200 or 1600 down to 100 or less, our mining, sea-board, agricultural, villages and hamlets.

Now I am bold to say of this Field that it stands second to none in interest and importance.

I know very well that some have an impression that the Towns are the best places for a first Curacy if a man wishes to see "work", and have guidance and training in that work. But the country can furnish both. And it may not infrequently happen that a ministerial life commenced quietly but honestly under the wing of some experienced and gifted Country Pastor (and there are such, not a few) would tend more to a healthy development of powers for usefulness than the hurry and bustle of a Town.

I know too that it is urged that the Towns as springheads of influence with their waters of naught require all the Elishas we can command to cast the salt

into them. But I would remind you that Shunem requires its prophet as well as Jericho, and furthermore that a very large percentage of Curates will eventually be drafted off into the Country as Vicars or Rectors. It behoves you therefore to have some regard to this possible sphere of the future.

I know further yet that our brethren of the Towns may have something to say in favour of their masses. They can parade numbers. They can point, and justly, to the kindling of soul which these numbers generate; to the quickening of intellect, and consequent production of resources. They can point to the rush, and life, and play of the forces for good and evil which forbid anything like clerical rust or stagnation. There is all this. But everything is not on the side of the big battalions. Our Country areas have their millions, and the few sheep are in their way not less precious than the larger flocks in the eye of the Great Shepherd.

You will find in certain aspects of their present *condition* some call for consideration.

(1) Take first, a general view of their *condition social*.

To estimate this properly you must remember that our Country Parishes are just now in a state of flux. The old order is decidedly changing and perhaps we have not yet arrived at the end of the changes. The time, I think, is coming when few parishes will present the beautifully stratified order of former days. Land-

lords are being evicted by processes as certain, if not so noisy, as those in the sister Island. The country squire is but the shadow of his former self. Sir Roger de Coverley and Lady Bountiful are fast disappearing. Occupiers and farmers in the agricultural districts have fallen on hard times. If not melting away from homestead and home, they find it a painful struggle to hold on. Small tradesmen are everywhere giving up business: the cart from the towns drives them out. The labourer is, practically, the master of the situation. And with the change of proprietors, and the dying out of the old class relations and feudal friendships, parson and peasant will, it seems to me, be brought into much closer contact.

All this marks a state of things which demands the wisest patience and the most patient wisdom. "Pilot wanted" is the signal flying from many a parish mast-head. There is work abroad for the strongest minds and most skilful hands amongst us if we are to meet the necessities of the new adjustments.

Since, then, our rural folk are likely to call for a larger share of attention, let us try to ascertain what is more particularly the present social state of the labourer proper. Is there anything in this to make the charge of him a matter of importance? I think there is.

For one thing, there is a general levelling-up in the matters of position, of taste, of feeling. I don't say that

this applies to every country parish. It would be hard to find any two alike in this or other respects. But whilst making all abatements the fact remains. The English labourer is a better paid, better housed, better dressed, better mannered man than he was thirty years ago. He has moved on and up with the rest of the world. Railways, village clubs and weekly newspapers are doing their work. There may be an "outer-barbarianism" still in some places, but "humanism" is largely asserting itself in others. Landlords, with the exception of that face-grinding class the small proprietors, are turning their attention to the vital question of cottage accommodation, and we shall not hear, I hope, in days to come that which is asserted now, viz.: that 50 % of English cottages have only two bedrooms, 20 % only one. The house is now less of a hovel and more of a home. Its arrangements are more decent. A little more pride is taken about the look of things by the tenant. The ornaments are less scanty and tawdry. There are more books for reading even if they are not always read. "The soul of music no longer slumbers in its shell." The concertina or its equivalent claims a chief place in many tidy front rooms and gives both employment and polish to the inmates. Nay, amongst other tokens of advancing civilisation, I can proudly point to a Christmas tree which has been a family joy in one of my cottages for many a Christmas-tide.

You may think that these things are but so many

social straws. They are so. But they mark the rising of a tide of which we are called to take notice. The problem of "assisted development" must be faced by us and that not grudgingly. For in the endeavour to raise a people on any lines we are helping to raise ourselves with them. Their social improvement means an increase of contentment and peaceableness and order all round, and so of prosperity to the nation at large.

I say, then, that the state social of our people calls for thoughtful and helpful consideration, *and* for the men who will consider.

(2) Nor is their state in *relation to politics* to be overlooked.

I must touch upon this because you will hear and read a good deal about it at this present time. Some alarmists conceive that a great political upheaval is to be the issue of the late Franchise Acts, and that certain parishes are so ripe for an "agrarian revolt" or "Servile War" that they only wait for a Spartacus to appear and lead them on.

But this is doing them a manifest injustice. It may be that a Delegate here, or a Socialist wind-bag there, or that sort of sea-lawyer which every parish produces has been busy in another place, and that some strife has been stirred up. But I fail to find on inquiry that either politics, or the political situation, calls out that absorbing interest with which our country folk are so largely credited.

You will, however, do well to remember that they in common with others of the labouring class have the future of the country very much in their hands, if they choose to wield the power which they undoubtedly possess. That power demands right and wise direction. And that direction you may help to give if you will act on some late suggestions of the Bp. of Peterborough.

He says in one of his addresses to his clergy:—"It is the duty of the clergy to influence the politics of the day not in the low, unworthy sense of mere party politics, but in the far higher sense of endeavouring to infuse into the politics of all men a Christian spirit. You should try to elevate political questions to the true and higher level, far above the degrading contentions of party strife: you should impress on your parishioners that, as citizens of an earthly as well as of a heavenly kingdom, all rights, privileges and political powers are trusts from God, to be exercised in His fear and service, for spiritual forces are those that move the world."

(3) I will ask you next to look at our *state intellectual*.

You must not rush to the conclusion that we of the country are in abysmal depths of impenetrable darkness. We may not be Arcady. We are certainly not Attica. But we are not Bœotia.

I can well understand how some of the quicker intellects amongst you look forward hopefully to deal-

ings with men as quickwitted as yourselves. You shrink from the idea of spending your lives in cutting into lead.

Now I will grant that there is ignorance, that there is a restricted range of ideas, that there is great scantiness of vocabulary, and of power to express those ideas. But for all that the ignorance is not invincible. Moreover beneath that apparent immobility, and behind that lack-lustre eye, there is a native shrewdness which gleams forth from time to time and betokens potentialities of understanding. What is more, our country people know how to put the minds they have into the things which they have to do. They may be innocent of much book-learning but they are keen observers. They may make a poor hand at reading aloud but they can tell you what is in their newspaper. And when it comes to pit-work, or farm-work, to working a seam, or cropping the land, or doing the best by stock, then are they "of those who know."

It is never safe to assume ignorance in them, or to trade on that assumption even though it be to secure some useful end. They see further than you think. And you may be certain of this that whilst you are trying to gauge *their* powers, they are taking *your* measure with no little correctness. However dull they may seem they can contrive to let you know whether *you* know your business or not. They have minds and the minds are on the move. The question of their

right development is one which gives additional importance to the present state of your Field.

(4) I come now to what is more important still, the *moral and spiritual* state of our Country Parishes.

I confess that I approach this part of my subject with some diffidence. I should not like to mislead, or convey false impressions. But absolute certainty is not attainable. The necessary data are not to be procured. A summary of criminal statistics on the one hand, and of Church statistics on the other would not enable us to strike a correct balance. Speaking, however, generally, and in view of observed facts, of trustworthy experience, and of competent testimony, I think it may be said that the wave of moral and spiritual progress has reached a higher mark in our day than ever before.

Perhaps to some this will not be saying much; as the mark is not very high.

It must be confessed that the Country still furnishes its quota of "home-heathen." It is true that the outbreaks of brutishness which shock us from time to time may be fairly regarded as exceptional; and that the Country Village has no monopoly of vice. But it cannot be denied that the tone of moral feeling in some of our pit-villages, nail-making districts, and out of the way agricultural places, is low indeed.

In some cases this may be traced to a heritage of vicious example which has never been checked; in

others to the degrading character of the environment in others to downright clerical neglect. But whatever the cause, the evil is there and must be admitted.

Nor are other parts of the Field without their moral blots. *Immorality* is dragging many down. Breaches of the VIIth Commandment and the foul workings of impurity which lead up to them and follow upon them, are only too painfully common. Little shame is felt by the fallen ones. Much pity and excuse-making is found amongst the parents. Wedlock, in the view of both, covers any suspicion of evil-doing.

But whilst the demon of impurity thus holds sway, the twin demon of *Drink* has no less power in other directions. In spite of all the efforts of Temperance Societies (and their results have not been small) our people are only too ready to fall under the temptation. Our Drink Bill is far too heavy. The use of spirits makes intemperance easy. A little goes a far way, and is less open to detection, especially among the women, no small number of whom are secret drinkers. The result is written large in the homes which are no homes, in the desperate shifts for bare livelihood when character has gone; in the enfeebled bodies, in the blighted, bloodless, ricketty children who are born under a double curse.

To these giant evils you may add, if you will, those of *Gambling* and *Betting*, which in some places are

sapping the foundations of honour and probity, though the Country is much more free from this stain than the Towns. And with all these things in view you will come to the conclusion that the moral sense greatly needs elevation all along the line of the Ten Commandments. In this elevation lies one great part of your coming work.

(5) But what is the more distinctly *spiritual state* of our people? Is it altogether satisfactory? I wish I could say that it was.

It would not, indeed, be true to say of our villagers that they were utterly without religious ideas, veritable "Pagani." The most illiterate have some dim, blurred, notions of a life beyond, which has some sort of relation to the life present.

Nor can we say that these religious ideas go no further than the quasi-religious belief of some who have an esoteric confidence in witchcraft. For there are those who still betake themselves to the "wise man," or "wise woman." I can personally testify that the progress of the XIXth Century with all its boasted advancement has failed to explode this and kindred superstition.

Nor yet again can we say that theoretical Infidelity has any deep hold of our country folk, though one does meet here and there with some blatant—very blatant—Bradlaughism. Practical Infidelity as shown in an oppressive indifference and apathy is more the rule.

Moreover we cannot say that our people are honey-combed with heresy, though divers quaint forms of perverted religionism crop up at times in most unlikely places. I have known, for instance, a family of Muggletonians in a secluded wood in Kent, and Swedenborgians in a smuggling parish in Suffolk, and Mormonites seeded about everywhere.

But whilst we cannot say that "darkness covers the land and gross darkness the people," there is only too much twilight.

(1) To begin with, there is too little *outward religious observance*.

God's Day, God's House, God's Worship, God's Sacraments do not hold the place they ought. This is particularly the case with the two first. As a nation we are coming to pay less attention to *God's Day*. The cry is for something less strict in the way of observance, less wearisome in the matter of services, less holy all round.

The Upper Classes must have their Lawn Tennis, their steam-yachting, their Sunday calls, their drives, their dinner-parties. What wonder if those below them learn to hold the day as cheap! What wonder if without any codified "Book of Sports" they substitute rabbit-coursing and pigeon-flying for bull-baiting and cock-fighting, or cricket for cudgel-playing, or general idleness and rowdyism for the baser brutalities of an earlier day! This growing neglect is no good sign, and

no amount of open museums, and Art Exhibitions, and secular or sacred concerts will prove a remedy.

And what follows as to *God's House*. Can we say with any truth that the larger part of our population attend any place of worship? With all allowance made for necessary detention for farm and other work there are still too many empty seats. Their looked-for occupants can give you no reason why they don't go. They simply don't.

In some places no doubt, that unwritten law of the Labourer's Union "Spite the Parson and don't go to Church" has taken effect. In others the "longsomeness" of the services, or their dulness, or their inconvenient hours; or the want of plainness, lovingness, and substance in the pulpit, are keeping folk away. However this may be the fact remains. Our country congregations need filling up. Too little water is drawn from the wells of salvation.

And the same may be said of the religious use of other means of grace. The Bible is not read as constantly or as deeply as it might be. Private prayer has more of form than devotion about it even where it is practised at all. Family prayer is almost an unknown quantity. The Sacraments are neglected and disused.

(2) The result of this too general neglect of things outward cannot but be a stunting of true Spiritual life. There may be the semblance, there is not the substance.

It is the dead image of the living thing: the name to live and not the life itself: plenty of "Shibboleth," not too much of Christ. And the proof of this lies in the want of self-surrender, self-consecration, self-denial: in the lack of personal holiness, and consequent lack of power with others; in the cold or careless neglect of the spread of God's kingdom in the world.

There is need, the deepest need, that the Spirit of God should breathe on the dry bones of our Country Christianity and bid them live indeed.

But whilst I say all this I would not have you suppose for a moment that all is death. There are signs of movement. Our Mission-Rooms and Lay Evangelists are beginning to tell. Christian work is better appreciated. Christian workers were never more welcome. The field in places is whitening to the harvest. God's host is moving forwards and that not as a "forlorn hope." It only waits for reinforcements. It waits for *you*.

Such then is the *Field*, in outline at least, which lies before you to be cultivated. Such are its general features, social, political, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. You will hardly think me wrong if I press its proved importance upon you. In any point of view it calls for earnest thought, and effort.

(1) View the Country Parishes *in their relation to the State*. They have a future before them as a coming power. They will make themselves felt in the moulding

of our land. I am no pessimist and repudiate the idea that they constitute a menace to Society as the manner of some talk goes. On the other hand I am no illusionist and do not assert that all our sweetness and light is to come out of the Country. But with facts before me, and history behind me I cannot refuse to believe that our villages are a factor with which coming Governments will have to deal. If it is said that the Towns govern the Country, we must not forget that our Country folk are leavening, as they are being leavened by, the Towns. How earnest then should be your endeavours to influence wholesomely this element of the coming democracy.

(2) View your Field next *in its relation to the Church of England.*

It has been lately said that "the battle of the Church has to be fought out in the country." The truth of this in one sense will appear if we remember how largely the state of our Country Parishes will contribute to the arguments for and against Disestablishment. If our adversaries can point with any truth to darkness which might have been light, to confusion which might have been order, to deformities which might have been beauty, to barrenness which might have been fruitfulness,—if in short they can reasonably contend that the Church has been a failure in the country through negligence, or unfaithfulness, or worse,—then the cry of "Down with it" will be listened to.

But if we can show that so far from this being the case there is advance along the whole line, that the life and progress which form so marked a feature in some districts are gradually, but surely, manifesting themselves in other directions, we can plead this justly in bar of any abolition.

*Church Development is the best Church Defence.* And by that development I mean not so much the building of new Churches or the restoration of old ones ; nor again new devisements of Ritual or multiplication of Services ; nor again perfectings of organisation and addition of machinery, but a growth of healthy Christ-life which shall be as instinct with power, as it is attractive in operation.

If we can show this there is no cause for fear. The English mind, notwithstanding some of its vagaries, has a strong tendency to stick to the useful where usefulness is proved. It is conservative of the commodious. And on this lower ground it will not incline to counsels of so-called Liberation, especially when such Liberation means, for our Country Parishes at least, loss of Pastors, loss of services, loss of purifying and elevating influences, to say nothing of the licence that will surely be generated by such loss. It will not in short have anything to do with a Liberation which will not only pauperise the Church but paganise the people.

It will be for you then not only to ascertain how far this development is a fact, but to assist it by every

means in your power. It is no untrue saying that the future of the Church of England lies very largely in the hands of you who may labour in the country. There is danger to the body if the extremities are in a state of perpetual chill—not to say mortification.

(3) View your Field, thirdly, *in its relation to yourselves.*

a. *It offers work worthy of your highest powers.* It is not, as some have ignorantly supposed, the proper and legitimate sphere for “Town-failures,” or for those whose talents are but few, and whose energies are on a par with their talents. It has problems in plenty which cannot be solved by the stupid or the slack.

There are some testing difficulties. Not the least of them is that connected with the character of the materials on which you have to work

It is not easy to get into touch with them: it is easy enough to get out of touch. The old witness of John Norris of Bemerton (1707) holds good to this day. “None,” says he, “are more captious or exceptionis than Country People, none more nice and difficult, and that must be treated with more care, caution, and observance. None that are more easily offended, or more hardly reconciled; that are more apt to take, or more backward to forgive, a slight, or an affront, or so much as a neglect.”

Here is something that will meet you at the first onset and continue throughout your campaign. It will

be quite enough to brace up all your mental sinew, and all your spiritual fibre,—quite enough to call into exercise your gifts of wisdom and loving persistency, yet on that account rendering the Field still more attractive to the honest and hearty worker.

*β. I will only add that the Field offers work which is remunerative in the highest degree.*

It gives you a peculiar scope for influence. It has been truly said that “the character and influence of the Parson in the country, is, in its proportion, of more importance, than in the town. He does not influence so large an area or population but he influences them more...In the Country Parishes the Parson is to be the centre of Spiritual life and Christian spirit, and that to the Squire and farmer as well as to the labouring man.” Yes, whether as “ludorum magister” or as leader to Christ, all depends on him. Such as the priest is such are the people.

But there is large return for loving outlay. You have it if you are true men and felt to be true by your people, in the gradual breaking down of opposition, prejudice, mistrust. You have it in the expansion of the understanding, and a greater willingness to listen to you. You have it in the drawing out of affectionate regard, the return of sympathy for sympathy, aye, and in not a few cases the rendering of gift for gift. But chiefly you have it in the conversion and confirmation of some of the sturdiest specimens of Christianity which can well be found.

For the genuine Christianity of a Church of England labourer is to be ranked very high. It may not be demonstrative, but it goes deep. It expresses itself in actions rather than in words. It is not labelled in large print. But for simplicity, childlikeness, reality, Godly sincerity, heartiness, common sense, and dependableness commend me to the soundly-converted English villager. Take him where you will he is a true and healthy example of the Bible gentleman. I can conceive no greater joy, no greater recompence for any servants of God than to be the spiritual fathers and fashioners of such souls as these. They may be rough enough at first and take some time to polish and to set, but in the end they shine forth as gems of the first water, and you have your reward.

I repeat then that you will find this field second to none either in importance or interest. It claims, and it ought to command, a more thoughtful consideration from all who are seeking work that is really work, work that in the highest degree can redound to the glory of God, and bring with it both present and coming recompence. It calls for the best energies of the best men. Study it, and you will desire to serve in it.

But now, having this field before you, what *objects* are you to keep in view as you take up its cultivation?

You may possibly think as you are confronted by this mass of matter which you have been told is

partly inert, partly seething with opposition, and only in part likely to be receptive, that your first duty is to try and raise its condition socially and secularly. You must educate, sanitize, recreate. You must humanise and civilise if you are in due course to Christianise. The plough must come before the Bible.

Well! I grant that these things have their place. There is a ministry of the body which must be attended to as well as a bishopric of souls. Some very earnest men are apt to overlook this. There is no question, however, but that the physical and social needs of our people must have a large share of our thoughts. Apart from their abstract value, improved dwellings, pure air, good water, decent literature, wholesome amusement, all contribute to that social elevation and moral advance which are excellent handmaids to true religion; and in some cases make way for her coming. They are the "virgins that be her fellows and bear her company." *But* they are not herself. They are not the Be-all, and End-all, of Pastoral work. You must look higher.

The primary object of the Christian ministry whether in town or country, is like the God-head which has appointed it, One, Holy, and Undivided. It is the *winning of souls* for God. Nothing less: nothing lower.

It has been said that until Christ is brought to a people, little is done. But until a people is brought to Christ nothing is done.

Here, then, you follow no earthly teacher. You view your Field in its relation to God, and from the stand-point of God's word. That gives you at once Christ's example and Christ's commission. He who came to seek and to save that which was lost sends you "to open the blind eyes, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Him."

And with this Christ-example and Christ-commission you have Apostolic life and Apostolic work to guide you. The one says, "I make myself servant to all that I may gain the more." "I am become all things to all men that I may by all means save some." The other says, "I warn every man and teach every man that I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

This then is, and this will ever be, your first object, the winning of souls.

For this you are debtors to them, to God, to yourselves. And in order to discharge this debt aright you will try to realise three great facts.

(1) You will try to realise *the value of the souls to be won*. Some may affect to pity you because your lot is cast amongst a body of poor rustics. You yourselves may even come to fancy at times that you were meant for better things than rough-hewing such unpromising materials. But for all that *they are precious in the sight of Him who made them*, they bear God's image

and are to be fashioned after His likeness. The glory which they have lost can be regained. They are capable of infinite possibilities.

You should approach them in the spirit of a certain wise Master-Sculptor. He was passing with some friends to his studio. As they crossed the yard where some blocks of marble lay, one of the party called his attention to a large slab and said, "That can never be turned to account, it is so monstrously uncouth." "Do you think so," was the reply, "I see an angel in it."

Just so! You also can see angels and more than angels in the unattractive humanities with which you have to deal.

Never forget again that *they are precious in the sight of Him who has redeemed them.* He could say of Israel in its lowest estate:—"Since thou art precious in my sight and honourable, and I will love thee, therefore will I give men in thy stead, and people for thy life." He can say it now with equal truth of our diverse populations. They are the souls for which He died. Each one cost the Life of the Life-giver. They stand at no lower price. Surely the sense of their value will give earnestness to your efforts!

(2) You will try to realise *the pleasure which God takes in the winning.*

There never was a truer word written by Mr Ruskin (and he can sometimes write very true words) than this: "God delights in our delight." But what is this but

the echo of another and far higher saying, "There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." God's greatest joy is in man's greatest joy, and what is that? The folding of the lost sheep; the finding of the lost coin; the home-fetching of the lost son.

You must bear this in mind as you meet each difficult and discouraging case. There is something to be done for that soul which can give the Saviour pleasure. He can come to see of the travail of His soul in it and be satisfied.

You will recognise the truth that God is all-sufficing for Himself; that He possesses in Himself all possible springs of happiness, that this is so much the case as to make this one of His choicest titles, "The Happy God" *ό μακάριος Θεός* (1 Tim. i. 11). Yet you must recognise this other truth, that He is pleased to have regard to this outward source of happiness—the winning of souls for Him. All His springs of delight are in His working Church. And you must recognise this further truth that it is possible for you, weak, human workers though you be, to give Him this happiness. It lies in your power by the help of His power to add to His joy by your labours for His kingdom; to quicken (I say it with all reverence) to quicken the deep pulsations of His heart by the conversion and building up of souls. Over these He will rejoice in His Love. The sense of His delight will give point to your efforts.

(3) Then, you will try to realize that *you are specially set apart for this winning.*

It does so happen in this hurrying full-handed day of ours that one man is not only called to fill many parts, but to try and fill them all at once. And you who are about to be called to the ministry of souls will be especially exposed to this snare. You will be wanted at all times for all things.

The result of this will be, unless you are careful, a general state of fussiness or diluted doing. You will lose force, and, with force, usefulness. Take a full-flowing river and divert it into numberless channels and you know what will come of this. Some noise of flow no doubt but, withal, shallowness and loss of vivifying influence,—a pool here and there it may be, but beyond these stretches of barren sand !

Keep steadily before you, I pray, the resolve that you will consecrate yourselves and be consecrated of God for this one thing first:—(as Bengel has well put it) “ad ea quæ pertinent ad vitam ex Deo, ad studium in Deum.”

You will not be ordained to be a Schoolmaster or a Doctor, or a Relieving Officer, or an Inspector of Nuisances, or a Club-collector, or a Policeman, but to be a “Soul-carer.” Those other parts may have to be played in their time, but only, and where, they can help forward the main object of saving souls. The sense of this will give singleness of aim and soundness of effort.

Put now these three facts together, the value of souls, God's delight in their winning, your own solemn call to give yourselves to it, and you have abundant motives for making that winning your first object in cultivating your field, even as your Lord and Master has appointed it so to be.

II. You have heard now something of the Field for the Labourer. I pass on to speak of the *Labourer for the Field*; "qualis sit," to use S. Gregory's language; and so prepare the way for discussing the "qualiter veniat," the "qualiter doceat" and the "qualiter vivat."

*What manner of men, then, are you to be?*

(1) First and chiefest you must be *Men of God* if in any sense or with any satisfaction you would be the Servants of God. First the man, then the minister. It is the primary qualification.

*God's word demands it.* "Lovest thou me?" then "Feed, tend, my sheep." We believe and therefore speak.

*Reason demands it.* You would not expect a blind man to discourse fittingly of colour, nor a deaf man to speak sensibly of harmony, no, nor a dead man to lecture upon life. And how then can you expect to care for souls if you have not first cared for your own, or to teach convincingly of sin if you have never rightly felt the plague of your own heart? How could you speak with power of a Saviour whom you have never really sought; or of an Atonement which you

have never truly realised; or of a spiritual change which you have never experienced; or of a Love which you have never grasped; or of a Hope which is but a shadow to yourself; or of a Holiness in which you have no conscious share?

It is the saved soul whom God honours in the saving of other souls. It is the converted minister who makes converts. There must be life in the teacher if there is to be life in the taught. The Sons of Sceva are not safely to be followed,

*Your people demand it.* They want no blind leaders of the blind, but those who can go before them and say, "This is the way: we have tried it, and know it to be the good and the right way."

*Your own peace of mind demands it.* There are few things more miserable than unreality. Nothing so enfeebles, nothing so cuts the sinews of all confidence as a sense of conscious want, even if there be not also the sense of conscious hypocrisy.

Personal acceptance, personal holiness, personal consecration, these are the leading elements in all profitable ministry. Nothing can make up for the want of them: not talent, not silver speech, not laboriousness, not strong sense of duty, not even the desire to do good.

I do not say this lightly, or without a very humbling recollection of an unworthy entrance on the sacred office on my own part.

Neither do I say it without the warrant of testimony from the lips of those whose names you will hold in reverence.

What does Dr Vaughan, the great Teacher, say? "Make the Gospel your own first. Feel it, love it, live it, find it nutritious, find it salutary, find it living and life-giving to you, and then as such dispense, present, minister it. Recollect, it is for your people's life, and that it may be so, it must be your life first."

What does Bp. Wilberforce, the great Preacher and Churchman, say? "Is the Lord dear to you? have you groaned beneath the burden of your sinful being? and has He turned, or is He promising to turn, those groans to joy?...Is the Christian life a reality in you? Do you know indeed what it is to have a place in the kingdom of grace, and in the strength of that grace do you desire to gather in the lost to Christ, their Lord and yours? ...Are you seeking to live so as to glorify God? This is a point on which you should obtain what certainty you can."

What does Richard Baxter, the great Puritan, say? "He is like to be a heartless preacher that hath not the Christ, and the grace that he preaches, in his heart."

What does Vinet, the great Swiss Professor, say? "Personal knowledge furnishes a title to exercise the ministry, and is a means of successfully fulfilling it."

What does Bp. McIlvaine, the great American Bishop, say? "The true savour and unction of the

Gospel as morning dews from the mount of God rest upon our ministry, when we speak that we do know, and testify what our faith solemnly realises."

What does Jerome, the great Father, say? "Clericus qui Christi servit ecclesiae nitatur esse quod dicitur... qui vel ipse pars Domini est vel Domini partem habet talem se exhibere debet ut et ipse possideat Dominum, et possideatur a Domino."

What does S. Paul, the great Apostle, say? "Take heed to thyself."

What does God say? Malachi ii. 5, 6: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."

Now to what do all these testimonies point? Is it not to this, that if you would get men to know and believe, you must yourselves, first of all, at least in some measure, "know whom you have believed."

"Themselves first training for the skies  
They best can lead their people there."

And whilst I do not say these things lightly, or without warrant, least of all would I say them so as to discourage those who ought not to be discouraged.

I know how busy conscience will be, how scrupulous, how ready to shut the door in the face of desire. But

I know also that the Lord will accept those who accept Him, however feebly;—will read a real love in a real desire to love,—will touch the uncleanest lips with the live coal when tremblingly anxious to confess Him and speak for Him, and will turn the veriest Jacob into an Israel.

(2) I mention here but one other qualification for the Labourers in this particular Field.

You must be *men of self-denial* as well as men of God. Other essentials will no doubt suggest themselves to you such as prayer, and study, and love, and sympathy, and diligence, and faithfulness. But these I leave for the present as hoping to deal with them further on. I press now the point of self-denial.

This grace, which is of the essence of Christian life, must be found in its fulness in the Christian ministry.

You especially who will be called to country work must lay it well to heart that your religion will not be of the “silver slipper” sort; your work not of the “easy-chair” sort; your warfare not of the “summer campaign” sort. Get rid at once of the notion that your Rectory or Curacy can allowably be looked forward to as a Castle of intellectual, physical, or any other kind of Indolence: a sort of Spiritual Sleepy-Hollow. It may not be. You are not enlisted, and you will not be ordained for this. A far less easy life is before you, if you will only interpret that life aright.

(1) To begin at the lowest point, *the financial.*

It is not so clear but that times still more trying than the present await the Country Parson and his helpers. What is bare enough now in the shape of a Living may be barer still in days to come. The crippling of income in one direction will lead to the fear of crippled usefulness in others. The result will be a still sterner self-repression in matters of personal expenditure. You may have to face this.

(2) Your *position* too will bring its discouragement of which isolation will not be the least.

Here in your College life, or there in your Home Society, you have no lack of sympathising and helpful companionship. You have not far to carry your cares, or seek for counsel.

But in the Country it is very different. Your Vicar may not be quite congenial. Your nearest like-minded neighbour may be miles off. Your Squire or Tenant-farmer is not always the person to whom you would open your mind. And thus with new experiences crowding in upon you, and knots to be untied for which you have neither the mental nor spiritual fingers, you will find it hard enough to be pretty nearly alone, and to be thrown almost entirely on your own resources. You have to face this.

(3) Further difficulties await you in connexion with your *flocks*, with their demands on your time, your patience, your temper, and these by no means always in spiritual directions.

You may not possibly suffer so much from unseasonable interruptions as your brethren in the Town. But there are such messages as this: "Mrs A. would like to see you, Sir, if not particularly engaged," and Mrs A. may live a "tidy step" away, and have after all only some bald chat to dispense which costs her nothing whilst it costs you perhaps half the morning.

But whilst fairly safe from an excess of these invasions, you will find that you are not so entirely masters of yourselves as you thought you were going to be. You are to be consulted on all sorts of subjects, at all sorts of times. You will have to shorten your meals, and spend long evenings away from home at Night-school, or Club, or Lecture. You will occasionally have to turn out like the horses of a fire-brigade at the shortest notice. And when all this readiness on your part is taken as a matter of right, and presumed upon to the uttermost; and when moreover in some cases there is no symptom of grateful return, you will have to put up with presumption and ingratitude as things of course. All this is very trying to flesh and blood even where God's grace is a moving force. Yet it must be faced.

(4) Then comes up the demand for *έγκράτεια* in all its shapes: the restraining of bodily appetites: the curtailing of lawful amusements: the choice of right society: the being not always "to be had": the careful avoidance of all that might give offence in personal behaviour, conduct of home, arrangement of secularities

—all these things and a multiplicity of other like things, constitute a very real and a very constant call on your powers of resistance. Yet you have to face them.

(5) And if I add to them those other *discouragements which come from within*, from the consciousness of spiritual pride, or overmuch self-dependence; or from disappointed hopes, and the fretting wear of an apparently unsuccessful or unappreciated service—then with all this before you to test your endurance you will surely have reason to feel that nothing but a strong principle of self-denial can help you through your way.

As an old divine said long ago, “Ministers’ work is no trifling work. It is ploughing work and sowing work: digging work and dunging work: planting work and watering work: dressing work and pruning work: it is wooing work and winning work: bearing work and nursing work. It is building work and bracing work. It is hunting work and fishing work. It is praying work and watching work.” Yes, but it is angels’ work. It is Christ’s work. It is God’s work. And if you seek to be fellow-workers with Him, you must deny yourselves.

When however I speak of self-denial I do not mean the spirit of asceticism in all its bare and naked conventionality. There is indeed a loud call for it at the present time. We are told that it is the one thing needed for our Town populations, our mission centres, and other spheres of work: that the time has come for

a revival of a Celibate if not of a Semi-monastic Clergy. This remains to be seen.

Meanwhile I contend that the spirit really called for is the outcome of the spirit of *true self-surrender*, the special gift of the Spirit of God. It is the spirit of self-denial as evidenced by self-repression, self-emptying, self-effacement. It was the Spirit of the Master. It is the spirit of the apostolic ministry. “If any man serve Me, let him deny himself.”

As men of God then, as men of self-denial, enter on your forthcoming Field, and your entrance will not be in vain.

Take these words of the Bishop of Wakefield for your stirring and encouragement. They were written indeed in relation to East London work, but hold equally good for work in the country. He says this:—“Though ‘Christianity be not in possession,’ I see much that is full of promise and prophecy of good. *Only give the men*,—real men, men full of the Holy Ghost and power, men of love and sympathy—manly men, patient men, *self-sacrificing* men—only give such men in sufficient number, and I should have no fear of the issue. The work is most difficult, the task is stupendous; but the work is full of intense interest and the task is the noblest to which a man can put his hands.

“Whether the Church will rise to the height of love, and power, and sacrifice needful for the accomplishment of the mission to which God is calling her, I know not,

but upon the accomplishment of that mission hangs the future welfare of England."

I will add, the future welfare of numberless souls.

Do you ask—Who is sufficient for these things? Let your great fellow-worker make answer:—"OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF GOD."

## LECTURE II.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN : HIS PREACHING.

I HAVE spoken of the Field which lies before the Labourers, and of the sort of Labourers best suited for the field as men of God, and men of self-denial.

For such Labourers some portions of the Field are whitening. Will not some of you go forth as Reapers ? Larger areas however are calling for the Plougher and the Sower. At present the best you can say of them is that they are little better than moral wastes. If not exactly in the stage of primeval forest there is yet some clearing to be done. There are pernicious under-growths of evil to be removed ; briars and thorns to be done away ; large breadths of fallow ground to be broken up ; weeds deeply-rooted and widely-seeding to be eradicated before these wildernesses can be turned into fruitful fields, the very "gardens of the Lord."

*How is their cultivation to be carried on ?*

I answer, firstly by the *Preaching of God's Word*.

I place this in the forefront of the methods which

you are to employ. But in so doing I have no wish to pass over or deprecate those other means of winning souls which it pleases God to bless from time to time.

They have their place and will be considered in that place. But it is not the foremost. That, I humbly conceive, is held by the public ministry of the Word.

It has been truly said that the leading principles of all ministry are to be found in these three things, *διδάσκειν, ποιμαίνειν, διακονεῖν*: that the greatest of these is the *διδάσκειν*, and that the leading form of the *διδάσκειν* is the living voice of the Preacher.

You will probably hear this contradicted. It is not only the people who like “short religion” who clamour for short sermons or none. There are those of a more devout spirit whose heart is toward service and ceremony, who say that the day for preaching is past,—that on the “segnius irritant” principle the clergy must speak more to the eye than to the ear. And there may come times when you yourselves will be tempted to think that they are right, when sermon-work is heavy, because sermon-thoughts are few, or sermon-hearers drowsy and difficult to interest, to quicken, to influence.

But you will not let these ideas and feelings have lasting place. You will remember that you are ordained to be the successors of the Prophets, that you will solemnly vow to be dispensers of God’s Word, yea that Preaching is God’s great ordinance for saving souls,

that "woe will be unto you if you preach not the Gospel."

You will remember also that *the majority of our people look for it* and especially our Villagers. Preaching is in their eyes an integral part of the worship in which they come to join. A Service without a Sermon is hardly a Service at all to them. You are wronging them if you are not wronging yourselves by the omission.

Apart from this matter of feeling you must remember further that Preaching is one of their greatest, most needed, helps. Other folk, they say, have books and leisure to read them. They can learn when and what they please. But the sermon is very often the labouring man's one book, at all events in the present half-educated state of our Country Parishes. You must preach to him if he is not only to be taught for eternity, but helped for time. If you are to show him how to make the best of both worlds, as well as to strengthen him under his temptations; to comfort him in his troubles as well as to raise his standard; to set before him his true place in God's Creation, and God's Church, and to fit him for it; to fashion him as a vessel for the Master's use, and give him a line for life, you must preach.

Let me add yet one other reason why you should not "despise prophesyings." *The Press, as a rule, is in its favour*, and the Press speaks very much for the people.

It is quite true that it constantly says hard things of Preachers and their preaching. It points to the empty pews and traces them to empty pates. It has a profound contempt for the meagre fare which is often served up as intellectual or spiritual food, and declares that it has nothing either of intellect or Spirit about it. It gibbets mercilessly the Prattler and the Floriculturist, and the Drone. But for all that, it holds steadily to the point, that the Pulpit is a power. And that power it is ready to acknowledge is not the mere presence of commanding intellect, but of heart-deep piety, good common sense, and loving sympathy with the souls addressed. It contends that there is a great future before the English Pulpit. It asserts that the feeling of most hearers is on the side of the Sermon, if the Sermon is of the right sort.

Now comes the question—*How are you to produce the right sort of Sermon?*

Here it is easy to theorise : easier still to refer you to the numerous books which deal with the practices of Preaching. For Preaching has a literature of its own, and if that literature could only make Preachers, the Church of Christ would have little to complain of in that direction.

But I am not so sure that Preachers are made by rule, or that it would be of special profit to have them cast in one common mould.

There are however certain great principles to be

observed. And if I give you these in the mass it is that you may beat them out into detail for yourselves and apply them as need may demand.

I. First, then, I would say "*give attention to preparation.*"

(a) *Prepare yourselves.* If, as it has been truly said, "the two leading elements in preaching are Truth and Personality;"—if also "whatever is in the sermon must be first in the Preacher;"—if again "you are to *be* as well as *preach* your sermons," then must you give first heed and greatest heed to yourselves. I will not labour this point further.

(β) *Prepare by study.* There is a needs-be for it. For you will be met, if not on the threshold, yet certainly in divers passages of your ministry, with the temptation that "anything" will do for country people as long as you talk fair sense and use Bible words.

You may also have this thought injected into your minds, that God's grace possessed by you may make you independent of gifts, and amongst these of the gift of close and continuous study.

But you will very soon find out on the one hand, that "anything" will *not* do for your people. They must have bread and not pap. And, on the other, that the gifts are needed to make the grace available.

We know indeed that it pleases God to use apparently uncultivated minds to rough-hew masses of men. Amos the herdsman has his place by David the wise.

But this is not God's ordinary way of working. These very men have been known to regret the want of more cultured minds, as well as of better-furnished stores. The pebble from the brook is rarely as effective as the arm of precision.

This *habit of study is the dictate of common sense*. You are to be merchantmen and it is with the Preacher's wares as it is with other wares: that which costs little is likely to be worth but little. You are to be physicians and no physician can work cures unless he knows the nature of the ailments with which he has to deal, and the properties and virtue of the remedies which he has to apply.

It is again suggested by *the state of your people* whether in Town or Country. You may have to cope with every conceivable form of opposition, from the dullest apathy of indifference to the most subtle, and subtilly expressed, misbelief.

If so, then the spear of truth which you carry must be so fashioned that it may now penetrate the seven-fold shield of irreligious hardness, now with an Ithuriel touch expose the true nature of some specious error.

Nay! is it not the *very command of God* that you should so study? The priest's lips must keep knowledge. The pastor must feed his people with understanding. The prophet is to inquire and search diligently. The scribe is to bring forth things new and old from his storehouse. Moses must pass from the

lettered wisdom of Egypt to the eye-teaching of the wilderness. Paul must go into Arabia. Timotheus and Archippus, the diligent and the slack, must alike "fill out" their ministry. Nay! the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, whilst preparing to be the Prophet and Teacher of men, must learn from human teachers, "hearing them and asking them questions" that He may grow in wisdom.

Study, then, is one of God's great laws for ministerial life wherever it is cast. There must be labour of learning as well as labour of love.

But what line is that study to take which shall make most for your preaching?

It may be said, indeed it has been said, that almost any kind of study, as long as it is study, can be turned to account. This is true, no doubt, up to a certain point. If we could all read bee-fashion, sip everywhere, and bring all we sip to pure honey, we might take out a roving commission for our reading to the great gain of ourselves and our people.

But "non omnia possumus omnes" and I will therefore confine myself to three chief lines which I conceive to be most important.

(i) Need I say that *the Bible must be your first, your most lasting, study.* It must be everything to you as it was to the Great Prophet who died with its words upon His lips.

Do not take this as a truism. There is more need

for the insistment than you may be willing to suppose. For independently of the very small amount of Bible-furniture which some men bring with them to the ministry, there is not a little teaching which is nothing if not *un-Biblical*. Now you will feel, I am sure, that the cardinal principle of all ministry is this,—the communication of God's truth to man, that it may "stir the soul, quicken the conscience, direct the life." But the great magazine of that truth is God's revealed Word. It must be treated as such. And I would earnestly lay it upon your hearts as I would have it laid upon my own, that nothing can make up for the want of strenuous, patient, exhaustive, prayerful 'bending over' the Book of Books.

You are familiar, no doubt, with that fourfold division of Bible study which our best and holiest teachers have suggested: (1) the Devotional and Personal, (2) the Hermeneutical, (3) the Critical, (4) the Homiletical.

I touch only on this last. In relation to this I would ask you to beware of treating the Bible as if it were only a repository of texts to which you have to turn week by week in an aimless, perfunctory sort of way. Gather, if you will, of the waving crops on the surface, but do not neglect the mines below, "the blessings of the deep that lieth under!"

I do not stop to suggest methods of study. These you will obtain, if you have not obtained them already,

at the hands of your various teachers, or from some of the many works which have matter peculiarly their own. But I do wish you to consider these few pregnant words, *Lege*, *Perlege*, *Relege*.

(1) "*Lege.*" *Read your Bible.* Read it as God's Word, the transcript of His mind, the reflection of His character, the unveiling of His purpose, the embodiment of His will.

*Read it as a whole.* Do not treat it as a collection of fragments having little, if any mutual connection or structural unity. For this gives rise to a vicious eclecticism which is sure to end in narrowness of teaching. It is no cumbrous cairn made up of detached blocks, but a living organism with such an interdependence of parts that to miss out any is to mutilate the whole.

(2) Next "*Perlege.*" *Read the whole of it, and read the whole of it thoroughly.* Do not pass over anything. Lengthy genealogies, lists of tribes, geographical allusions, archæological illustrations, obscure prophecies, apparently trifling details—all have their place and use and power, historically, evidentially, apologetically.

(3) Then "*Relege.*" *Read it all over again and again.* It will bear this better than any other book in the world. There are always new depths to fathom, new heights to climb. It need never pall upon the taste. Divine freshness is as much its mark as Divine

fulness. Only bring thought to it and you will carry away much thought from it.

‘Lege, Perlege, Relege’—in the originals if you can, with the best helps where you can, on your knees when you can. Turn first your prayer upon the Bible, then turn the Bible into prayer. Never forget those old words of counsel, “Si vis esse bonus concionator da operam ut sis bonus Biblicalus.” “Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus.” Your sermons should be the Bible in solution.

(ii) *Your next principal line of study should be that of systematic Theology.*

This may seem useless to some as far as the Country Parson is concerned.

But what is Theology? Is it not the science of sciences, the science of the Bible? Is it not the Bible compacted into a system, so that you may the more easily present it to your people in its unity, its harmony, its proportion? Is it not therefore the very help you need if you are to preach the Word in anything like its variety and exactness?

No doubt there is a great outcry against dogmatic theology just now. It is supposed to interfere with the “sacredness of intellectual liberty,”—to impose “bonds” upon unwilling or ignorant hearers,—to be an “opinion,” not a science. We are required to swallow our formulas and abjure our Creeds.

But theology still remains a necessity. There is a

plan of salvation, a symmetry as well as a substance about God's truth which cannot be dispensed with. Its lines are defined for our guidance. They suggest inquiry, they repress ill-regulated speculation. Badly will that teacher fare who thinks it possible to be free from their environment and wholesome restraint. He would be like a kite cut loose from its string. He might have a certain liberty, and soar to a certain height. But he soars only to fall, and the higher the height, the more damaging the descent.

Independence of Theology may be purchased at too dear a price. Dislike of dogmatic truth is apt to degenerate into the barest, narrowest, shallowest Positivism.

But if Theology be thus necessary for you who are to teach, as tending to clearness of view and correctness of statement, it is no less essential in view of those who have to be taught. Nothing carries conviction like clearness of expression. If half-truth is the mother of heresy, truth half-digested is the fruitful parent of confusion and consequent error.

I grant that a logical scheme of doctrine is not intended to take the place of the living Word, but in so far as it conveys the teaching of that Word it is a great help against haziness. It is truly said that "modern religious life is far less robust on its intellectual than on its practical side." Much of the present "anarchy of belief" is traceable to a lack of right theological

thought. Men, in country as well as town, do not believe, or are hampered by misbeliefs, because they are not taught fully what they are to believe.

Added to this no small loss is sustained by the omission, or mutilation, or partial and confused statement of sundry portions of Divine Truth. The Fatherhood of God, the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ, the Personality of the Holy Ghost, the condition of man as fallen, the right use of the Law, the nature of Regeneration, the true place of Repentance, the right working of Holiness, the proper efficacy of the Sacraments,—these truths and others like them, are often so diluted and distorted as to make men turn away altogether from dogma, or exhibit nothing but a dwarfed and deformed Christianity in their lives.

For your peoples' sake then as well as for your own, *study Theology*. Only let it not be the dry, sapless, barren Theology which once prevailed, but a flesh-and-blood Theology, full of marrow for men because full of the manifestation of God.

And let none say that it is impossible on the score of want of time. Least of all should the Country Clergyman say this. With all allowance made for the demand of your Personal Religion, your Pulpit, and your Pastoral oversight, you can make something more than a margin for steady continuous Theological study. I have long had the impression that the busiest amongst us could secure, if so minded, at least a clear

hour each day for this special work. I am glad to see that the idea is being urged by those in authority, and that in one Diocese a "Study Society" has been formed which promises the best results.

The Church of England, some say, is waiting for a future Bull or Hooker who shall re-establish her doctrine, re-construct her polity, compose her differences, and diffuse new life throughout her borders. Who shall say that he is not to be the product of some quiet Country Parish, with its sanctified leisure for learning?

(iii) As a third line of study I would suggest this, —*Study your own times*. You cannot act healthfully on the age unless you understand in some degree its spirit and its books.

There is only too much truth in the criticism that "the Pulpit is much out of gear with the day, too often a piece of machinery wheeling away with its teeth absolutely fitting into nothing."

You must take account of currents of thought, currents of feeling, currents of life, and notably of the craving for change with its consequent *avouïa*, and the aversion to hardness with its consequent outerop of easy-going worldliness.

Nor should you be ignorant of the literature of the day, any more than of the literature of the past. Keep yourselves abreast of its discoveries, principles, opinions, and you will not make foolish and hurtful mistakes. Not that you need know—or attempt to know—

everything. Read what you can digest, assimilate, and reproduce to profit, either for instruction or illustration. Only read so as to grapple with men's minds. Cultivate your powers of intellect with a view to keener spiritual apprehension, to feed a sanctified imagination rather than to air a barren knowledge.

I do not contend for "newspaper-leader or leaderette" sermons, though you will do well to throw what light you can upon topics and questions of the hour, as well as upon the special condition, moralities, vices, and needs of your parishioners, and so shape their opinions as well as straighten their lives.

We live on earth, and must use the things on earth, but only and always to lift the earthly into the heavenly, to raise men to God.

Such then are the three principal lines of study which I have more especially to recommend to you. Study God's Word. Study Doctrine. Study your times.

"*Ἐπεχε τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ*"—yes! and "*ἐπίμενε.*" Such is the Apostolic direction. Lay on more than the original thin veneer. Don't let your books be treated as cinnamon trees, valuable only for their bark. Don't let your teaching power be weakened by the pressure of parochial work. There must be fire in the pulpit, if there is to be warmth in the pew. But fire there cannot be without fuel. If the library of your mind be only filled with duplicate volumes, and if the sermons of one week are only certain predictions of those in the

next, you must not wonder if your people prefer straying to starvation. They cannot live on old and mouldy stores.

“If,” says an old divine, “the minister labours not to increase his stock he is the worst thief in the parish.” Paul now ready to depart could send for his books and papers. Perhaps Timotheus learnt something by that message. Labour then, and your labour will not lead to loss. Study—right, continuous, study is strength. Men win when they work. The result of your study will be seen in the effectiveness of your preaching. You will find the truth of that pithy saying of S. Augustine, “Nostrum est docere, delectare, flectere.”

(1) Your study will give you the chief elements of teaching power.

For one thing it *will secure largeness and comprehensiveness of view*. Your broad acquaintance with truth will save you alike from that reproach of narrowness which is such a bugbear to many, and from that spurious liberality of sentiment which gives up everything and gains nothing in return.

For another thing it *will secure freshness and vigour of thought*. You will yourselves think to purpose as you have your senses exercised on the certainties of Theological truth, and you will help others to think. Penetration, perception, elevation,—all come of closer contact with the deep things of God.

For another thing it *will secure not only sufficiency*

*of material, but wisdom of treatment.* It leads to discrimination. You cannot approach all men in the same manner, or on the same side. The state of the minds before you is as diverse as the state of soul. But you will have read men as well as books. And the combined knowledge of the natures to be dealt with, and the virtue of the instrument which you have to apply, will qualify you for a clearer insight, a more appropriate and delicate touch. Ignorance, apathy, prejudice, interest, passion, feeling, all lie open before you. The springs of action are within your reach. The Word of Truth is rightly divided. Its power is felt. Impression is made. Men are *taught*.

(2) Your study will help you to *please*. It will furnish the great elements of attractiveness, viz.: depth and variety. Men like the marrow of a truth better than the bones. Give them something to grapple with, and they will give you their best attention. But give them also variety. Our natures abhor sameness. Feed a man always on the same food, and you will probably stunt his growth and shorten his life. Study will prevent this. As you open your stores there will be something to please all tastes. You will interest. You will move. You will please; without pandering to itching ears.

(3) Your study will tend to the *bending* of men's wills.

You will have in your hand all that can reach and

renovate the heart. By it you will be able to display the character of God in the most winning way and so “multiply copies of His infinite perfections.” You will be able to present the Personal work of the Personal Christ in all its saving and transforming fulness. You will insure the special presence of God the Holy Ghost, for those who honour Him in study, and by study, shall be honoured of Him. A ministry of study is a ministry of power. You will influence. You will persuade. You will win.

Be then in earnest to show yourselves workmen that need not be ashamed in relation to this great element of preparation, this weighty preliminary of study.

Ponder well those words of Jerome, “Disce quod doceas et tum non, temeritate quorundam, doceas quod nescias.”

Ponder more these words of S. Paul, “Ταῦτα μελέτα, ἐν τούτοις ἵσθι.”

II. I turn to the next great pulpit-principle. *Give attention to your object.* What are you to aim at?

Take S. Paul’s estimate as given in Col. i. You are to “present every member of your congregation perfect in Christ Jesus.” In order to this you are “fully to preach the Word of God,” to do this by “proclaiming Christ,” and by so “administering and teaching,” that Christ may be formed in them “the hope of glory.” This is your ultimate aim.

To carry this out you must give good heed to various subservient aims: you will not only seek to have them ‘saved in Christ for ever,’ but you will also seek to shape their lives for God’s service here. You will labour not only to bring them to correctness of Creed, but to a Christ-full career. Recognising the fact that they were made in God’s image, you will endeavour after the reproduction of His likeness, that the promised dominion may be theirs. (Gen. i. 27, 28.)

Development in short in each and all of the Christian graces in their equal proportion and their fullest measure will be your aim. As Solomon’s builders had it in charge to quarry, chisel, polish, set, and build up each several stone of the Temple, so have you to deal with the material which God puts into your hands. To use the quaint phrase uttered in a Cambridge pulpit some 200 hundred years ago, you have to “beget begetters,” (*generare patres*) or as Archbishop Benson puts it to “turn your converts into converters.” This can only be done by making them good, all-round-Christians, in every department of life. They must not be “overgrown babes,” “lopsided vessels,” or have one part of their spiritual and moral being matured at the expense of the rest.

What we want in our parishes is a good, wholesome, soundhearted, Godly-manliness, which will carry Christ into the field, the shop, the market, or the home, and

commend Him in the carrying. This and nothing short of this is the mark at which "to point the arrows of your desire" and effort, a working Holiness.

You will look to this. And perhaps it would save some vague and desultory preaching if you wrote at the head of the first page of your sermon the words, "What is my object?" and then prepared, and preached accordingly.

III. *Give attention to your matter.* What are you to preach?

You need be at no loss here. "Publish abroad the kingdom." "Tell the good tidings of Christ and of Peace through His Name." "Proclaim the Word." "Proclaim Christ and Him crucified." "Proclaim the Word of Faith." "Proclaim remission of sins." So runs Christ's command, and Apostolic injunction.

The bearing is clear. You are to be Prophets with a definite commission; messengers with a definite message: heralds with a definite proclamation. You have nothing to originate, nothing to evolve. You are to carry a revelation, to make known a mystery or open secret, to speak of a manifested Person and His Work. In a word you are to preach Christ. Christ as the Life, its principle, its pattern, its power. He is your great matter-fountain. Rising from Him the stream of Life becomes parted into its many heads for the fertilising and refreshing of God's gardens in men's souls.

But take two cautions. (1) *Get clearly before you what is meant by preaching Christ.*

The term has been ground down into a conventionality. It repels some minds, it prejudices others. They get possessed with the idea that they will be called upon to repeat one special doctrine or set of doctrines, which however true and precious in themselves may weary by constant presentation.

But the true preaching of Christ has a breadth about it which is well nigh beyond broadness. You must perforce dwell at one time on the Law which leads to Him, on the Sin which constitutes our need of Him: and that, not merely after the manner of some who treat sin merely as a defect, but insisting upon the point that it is the deadliest contradiction of God's holy nature, the deepest affront to His Love, as well as the most condemning injury to men's souls.

Out of this again must flow in orderly sequence all that relates to the Great Remedy—its procurement by the sacrifice of Christ: its announcement by the Word of Christ: its application by the Spirit of Christ: its appropriation through faith in Christ: its issue in the imitation of Christ.

With all this range of teaching before you, you need never think that you are narrowed down to one point. The "plenitudo Christi" is the "plenitudo Scripturae."

I should like to emphasize this by some words spoken by an eminent Preacher of the present. He

says, "A ministry of which the Christ who lived and died for us is manifestly the centre, may sweep a wide circumference and include many themes. The requirement bars out no province of thought or experience, nor does it condemn the preacher to a parrotlike repetition of elementary truths, or a narrow round of commonplaces.

"It does require that all themes should lead up to Christ, and all teaching point to Him: that He should be ever present in all the preacher's words, a diffused even when not a directly perceptible presence; and *that His Name like some deep tone on an organ shall be heard sounding on through all the change and ripple of the higher notes.*

"Preaching Christ does not exclude any theme, but prescribes the bearing and purpose of all. The widest compass and richest variety are not only possible, but obligatory for him who would, in any worthy sense, take this for the motto of his ministry, 'I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'"

Pascal suggests that "as there is one, and but one indivisible point from which every picture can be rightly viewed, every other point being too high or too low, too near or too distant, so is there in Theology one and but one right point of observation and that point is the Cross of Christ.

"The Preacher who takes his position there com-

mands a view of all revealed truth, and will be sure to present faith and duty in their just relation and proportion."

(2) My other caution is this:—*Preach a Personal Christ.*

He is no abstraction: no aggregate of doctrines, but a living, breathing, Divinely-human Person. It is in this fact that the power of His Gospel lies. And we come very near to the hearts of our fellow men, rich and poor alike, when we can with all reality speak of One who can be nearer to them than their very selves; no Hindoo Brahm, no God of the Epicurean who abides in a far-off indifference: no God of the pseudo-scientist who is content with having made a world and has then to leave it to be looked after by Law: no God of the Agnostic, if indeed the Agnostic has a God other than an unknown and unknowable quantity:—but the very Incarnate Love; the Saviour from all sin, the Sympathiser with all distress; the Soother of all sorrow, the Strong and ready Helper of the downcast, the struggling, and the weak.

It was a true and weighty saying of Archbishop Tait to his Candidates for Ordination: "You will never want for hearers when you have something worth hearing to preach about; and you will never want that something if you preach about the Lord Jesus," the Personal Christ.

In close connexion with this preaching of Christ

and issuing out of it, comes what is now generally known as *Ethical teaching*—the teaching which relates to practical morality or holiness of life.

Some have thought that in past days too little regard has been paid to this, that undue stress has been laid on doctrine. They have therefore dropped doctrinal sermons.

All such might do well to bear in mind some words of the late Professor Maurice. He says, "It seems self-evident to a number of laymen and perhaps as many Clergymen, that if he who runneth is to read, the preachers of Law and Gospel must desert the transcendent ground, and confine themselves to rules and maxims which touch upon the doings of earth. And yet experience shows that wherever this course has been pursued, boors have cared as little for the preacher as gentlemen. The Puritans of the XVIIth Century and the Methodists of the XVIIIth exercised an influence which the Establishment did not exercise. BUT the Puritans and Methodists had ascended into the divine region."

In all right preaching doctrine and practice must go together. They are to each other as root is to branch. You may not sever the second half of any of St Paul's Epistles from the first, nor the first from the second. The Christ of Bethlehem, of Calvary, and of the Crown is also the motive-power for all common life.

But whilst this is most true, the conduct of that common life will claim a large share of your thoughts. The Spiritualities may not be dwelt upon to the exclusion of the Moralities.

You will have before you a little world in that Country Congregation of yours, with varying wants, conflicts, interests.

Independently of the ordinary questions of the day which affect them, there are matters of home, and business, and social life, on which they look more or less to you for a lead, e.g. Temperance, Purity, Land, Local Government, Free Education, and the like.

You can help them more than you think. At all events you can lay down principles and not seldom suggest details. If you will only seek for wisdom and self-effacement you can deal out counsels to Squire, Farmer, and Labourer which will tend to make them all better citizens, better workmen, better neighbours. They will not indeed often come to you for consultation, but your pulpit will be your consulting room. There you may prove yourselves to be no unskilful "ductores dubitantium" and "dissolvers of doubts."

There will always be some subjects which you cannot take up in the pulpit. These are best relegated to the School-room, or Club-room, and set lecture. But in so far as they relate to the *ἡθος* of your people, you will see that they have due place. Men will listen to you

none the less readily if they find that you can touch, and touch wisely, the plane of their every-day life, and show yourselves Christian Socialists or Social Evangelists in the best sense.

Such then will be the matter of your preaching—Christ the Life of all life, and all that makes for that Life in Christ. This is to be your message.

With so wide a range before you, you will naturally ask for some light on that constantly recurring problem *the choice of subjects*. One primary direction is this: Get your message from God. If He is to speak through you by His Spirit, you must go first to Him and hear what the Lord God will say unto you. Prayer is the best Sermon-preface.

Having done this, then look to the Services of the day or week. Liturgy, Collect, Epistle, Gospel, Lesson, Psalm, will generally furnish all you need. And there is this twofold advantage in looking to them; that our Liturgy gives you the great facts of doctrine in their due order and proportion, whilst the Lessons and other portions will generally suggest history, character, precept, which can be turned to present account.

Moreover you command the sympathy and so the attention of your hearers much more readily when you take up a subject which is more or less in their thoughts, as having been more or less under their eyes.

I know this too for a fact that there is more Bible-reading in our Cottage homes on Sunday evening than

is generally supposed. Our folk turn generally to the passages read in the Services of the day, and, as they say, they "like to remember what our Master said about this or that text."

By way of shorter suggestions I would add:—Keep a register of subjects which may occur to you from time to time in your study of the Bible. Keep another of the subjects which you have already treated so that you may preach proportionally. Deal as readily with the Old Testament as with the New, throwing what light you can upon its difficulties. Keep an eye on parish events as well as on all public questions. For it has been truly said "God teaches by events. The scenes going on round us are the lesson-books of Providence, and we should try and point the moral of the whole." Above all gather from your pastoral visits what may help to feed the rest of your flock.

With God's three great Books open before you, the Book of His Word, the Book of His Works, and the Book of the human heart you need never be at a loss in your choice of subjects.

IV. Give attention to the *manner* of your preaching. You have your subjects—how are you to handle them with most effect?

I am not going to give you a treatise on the Art of Preaching. Such treatises are to be had in some variety from S. Augustine onwards, and, I will add, in some variety of dryness also. From the better sort you may

gather some valuable hints, though I should rather pity the hearers of sermons constructed entirely upon book-rules.

On the subject of *manner* they are generally agreed. In its relation to method or form they divide sermons into two classes, (1) *the Topical*, (2) *the Expository*.

By the first they mean those which are drawn from one text or short passage, and contain, for the most part, one leading idea which it will be your object to press home.

By the second they mean the taking of a larger portion of Scripture—history, miracle, parable, or incident, which is to be beaten out at greater length, and from which you are to draw a greater variety of lessons.

There is much to be said for each of these methods, and if you wish to preach attractively as well as effectively you will be at pains to combine them. For although unity is a good thing in preaching, monotony is not. “The keenest musician whose whole soul is absorbed by the melody of a single chord would be apt to tire if you always held down those notes.” You must avoid sameness of arrangement as well as sameness of subject.

Nevertheless if you are to prefer either of these methods give the preference to the Expository. I say this in the interest of Country congregations.

I know indeed that objections are raised to it, either

on the score that long texts mean short preparation ; or because long texts are hard to follow continuously ; or because people get tired of hearing the Bible explained ; and would prefer something new, or something with more of a home-thrust about it.

But none of these objections are very serious. You can easily take out such sting as may be in them, by giving your best time and thought to elaboration. The lack of freshness or penetration need never be felt.

On the other hand the advantages are distinct enough. You follow Apostolic and primitive practice even if you do not follow the Rabbinic rule that not less than 22 verses of the Prophets should be read and commented on at any one time. You bring out more of the mind of God as expressed in His Word. You carry out the teaching purpose of the ministry by bringing your people into closer acquaintance with the Bible. You insure a better knowledge of that Bible for yourselves. You have the opportunity of dwelling on certain subjects, putting your finger on certain blots, rebuking certain sins, as well as giving certain much-needed directions, without a thought of personalities, and in a way which you could not secure by any mere topical treatment. Above all you are delivered from the temptation of using "accommodated texts," and can treat your subjects as plainly and literally as they lie before you in the Book.

I hold this Expository Preaching to be one of the greatest wants of the English Church at this time. Our people are not half taught. Great breadths of Scripture are utterly unexplored, and remain as much a dead letter as if they had never been written. If this plan were more frequently adopted we should see a return to the old practice of bringing Bible as well as Prayer Book and Hymn Book to Church, whereas now our Church-fardels as well as our Church-instructions are of the lightest description.

I would say to every Country Clergyman who has a fairly settled congregation and is not saddled, as I am, with two Churches,—let one at least of your Sunday Sermons be an Exposition. I do not mean by this that you should always be preaching “courses” of sermons. They have their use, but they can be overdone. Few things tend to weary your people more than to hear you give out Sunday by Sunday the same Book and it may be the same Chapter. This can easily be avoided, and you will find your gain, if I mistake not, in the growing intelligence if not in the increasing attendance.

Take your passage. Treat it contextually. Interpret it clearly. Explain it fully. Throw every kind of direct light and side light upon it. Pick out two or three leading lessons. Apply them with all due force.

And let all this be done not in a stiff, so-called Sermon-style, but in a way of easy, natural, talking. For your preaching proper is an *óμιλία*. It is a

conversational address. It is no oration. Still less is it to be an exhibition of rhetorical fireworks. You will not indeed hurl (as a distinguished preacher once said in this University), you will not "hurl the missiles of mediocrity from the catapults of commonplace," but you will give the best of your best in all plainness of speech, and handle God's Word as God's Word, reverently, believably, lovingly, persuasively.

There is no lack of models for this kind of preaching. But the very best help that you can get for aptness in this line is to be found in the mission-room or cottage lecture. The preparation of that with its personal arrangement of outline, followed by judicious consulting of commentators, and delivered in a somewhat undress form, either from notes or without them, will greatly facilitate your more studied efforts for the Pulpit.

Only be fired with an Ezra-like ambition to make your people "understand the reading."

Passing now from the manner of your preaching in its relation to *method*, I would speak of that manner in relation to expression.

I will touch but two points.

(a) And, first, I would say, *aim at that eloquence* which is found in "*earnest simplicity*." It is almost everything (I was going to say) with our country-people. Others may insist on boldness, fervency, wisdom, and love, but all these avail little without simplicity. Your people, with a few exceptions, will

not come where they cannot understand. No doubt some few like a highly-charged rhetorical sermon, full of figures and flowers. But flowers are not food.

Some, again, in your congregation may like a touch of metaphysics now and then, or a little science, or a little controversy. But these will not be the most numerous or the most hopeful in your flocks. And they are certainly not the first to be thought of. There are needs which stand before these. You are charged to preach the Gospel to the poor, to make its darker places light, its deeper truths clear, its plain things not less plain. Therefore be simple.

This does not require that you shall announce to your people that you are going to "preach a simple sermon," or to "preach simply to them." For "simple" they always read "silly," and you would gain little by the announcement. Be simple without calling yourselves so.

(1) Try to *think* simply. It does not mean that you will think less deeply or logically, but that you will think clearly, and clear thought on your part will lead to clear thinking in others.

It will be appreciated. The highest compliment I ever heard paid to a preacher was the comment of a Kentish parishioner on the sermons of a friend and curate of my own. He was about to leave the parish, and the man said, "We are very sorry to lose Mr. P., Sir! we like his preaching so much. You see, Sir, he talks just as if he was inside of us!"

The fact was that my friend thought simply, and the order of his thinking was like their own. He could therefore put things in a way which they readily understood.

(2) Then, *speak simply*. Let your words set out your thoughts, conveying, not concealing them. Bear in mind that the vocabulary of your hearers is very limited, and that Johnsonian English and three-cornered words are much to be avoided. The hay may be held too high. You have to aim at hearts through heads, but you must take care that the heads be hit, and it is not every kind of word-bolt that will hit them.

This does not mean that you are only to preach in monosyllables, or only, and always, in the vernacular of your district. By all means study that vernacular, and use it in its right place. But that place is not to be found in every sermon-sentence. If you give way to the temptation (and it is a temptation) of using dialect too often, your people will think that you are trying to talk down to them and they will not thank you for it. Use it sparingly. A little goes a far way.

Then put your plain words into short sentences. The periods (say of Dr Chalmers) which run for a page and a half without a full stop,—or the Germanised English which some affect with its involved and tortuous clauses, are not for the country. Avoid adjectives and all surplusage of that kind. It was all very well for Harmodius to say with Aristogeiton ἐν μύρτῳ κλάδῳ

τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,” but the Country Preacher had better drop the myrtle bough and use the naked steel.

Cultivate the power of illustrating, and lay up good store of simple illustrations. The “Country Parson” says Geo. Herbert “telleth them stories.” Draw your lights from every quarter, but chiefly from natural objects, and such things, persons, books, papers as come under the eyes of your people. Was it not this appeal to sense which gave such attractive power to the preaching of our Blessed Lord? And was it not this which at an early period made the words of Amos the sycamore-gatherer so incisive and impressive? The homely is often the heart-reaching.

Be careful, however, to use your illustrations accurately. If you show ignorance, or get muddled, about the things of common life which you are pressing into the service, your people will be tempted to think that you may not be a safe guide on other points. You cannot be too correct.

It is worth taking a little pains to feather as well as point your arrows. You will find it useful in this connexion to form the habit of introducing Missionary matter into ordinary sermons, and to draw illustrations of Christian experience from the hearts and lives of native converts.

Lastly, I would say, *do not be afraid of a little repetition.* You want to lodge your idea. Put it then in as many shapes as you can. A former clerk of mine,

who owed his spiritual life to preaching (not mine) once said of a famous preacher, "Ah! he is a master-man. He goes hammer, hammer, hammer, till he gets the nail right home."

Be simple then in thought, speech, illustration, presentation of ideas. There is all the difference in the world between a diamond in the rough, precious indeed but with little telling brilliancy, and the same diamond ground and polished, with every several facet aglow with light. Your sermons should be of that last sort.

(2) *Aim next at great directness.* "Use great plainness of speech." Never preach third-person sermons. Nobody knows where "he" lives. Let there be no mistake about what you have to say and want to say. Come to the point at once, and whether you have to rebuke vice, or anatomise an evil habit, or dissect some doubtful pleasure on the one hand, or, on the other, to direct a soul to Christ, or minister spiritual support, "let your yea be yea, and your nay nay." This present generation requires a little more of John the Baptist in its preachers. We are getting too mealy-mouthed. You need not be coarse, but neither need you be too smooth-tongued. Above all you must let your hearers feel that the message you bring is a message intended for them. Your bearing and your language should both say plainly, "I have a message from God unto thee," or, "Men and brethren, unto you is the word of this salvation sent." Let your preaching be so direct

that it may be said of you as it was said of Luther,— “His words were half battles.” I will only add that if you are to aim at this simplicity and directness you must aim at one thing more,—*a thorough grasp of your subject*, as well as a mind thoroughly made up on the point of doctrine or duty which you wish to send home. You cannot expect much right-shaping of thought or decision of view in your hearers if you do not possess them yourselves. The stream will be as the fountain from which it is supplied.

Your sermon if it is to be an ideal sermon “must be strong in its appeal to authority, wide in its grasp of truth, convincing in its appeal to reason, earnest in its address to the conscience and heart.” (Phillips Brooks.)

Such then is to be the nature of your “prophesying” as to preparation, matter and manner. I cannot profess to have touched more than the fringe of the subject, and have been obliged to omit many points on which I should like to have dwelt. I can only append some short but working suggestions on one or two matters about which, if you wish to magnify your office as teachers, you may occasionally be exercised.

(1) *Concerning extempore preaching.* Be clear as to what is meant by it. It does not refer to the making of your sermon but to its delivery. If you say as some have said, “Oh! I never thought of my subject until just before I got into the pulpit,” you may depend upon it that very few of your hearers will think about it

afterwards. By all means aim at "extempore" delivery in due time and drop the "bosom-sermon." The more your people get of your eye, and the less your sermon notes get of it, the more will they attend. But then your matter must be well prepared. You may grind your meal too fine in your preparation sometimes, but this is better than giving whole corn which they will not grind for themselves. Possibly there will be times when you will be too much pressed to prepare a sermon fully. When this happens, do as the late Bishop of Oxford did. Dean Burgon tells us how he used to get two or three great thoughts out of the passage on which he had to preach, and think them well out. He then had little difficulty about the words. "Verbaque pro-visam rem non invita sequuntur."

But as a rule, whether it be for the Church, or the school, or platform, or the open air, for service, or for meeting, or for conference—prepare. Write all you can. Digest all you can. And then deliver all you can "extempore."

(2) *Concerning length of sermons.* No hard-and-fast line can be laid down. Speaking as a Country Clergyman I do not hold to the counsel so often repeated, "Don't exceed a quarter of an hour, or at the most 20 minutes." This does not suit our country-folks. They can bear to be talked to, if you talk aright. They like a full meal. They love to "hear a good tale" or "have a longish doing." You must remember too

that they are vessels of small capacity, and that the stream must run pretty fully and continuously, if even a few drops are to be caught. Use your common sense. Put yourselves in their place. Do as you would be done by. Suit your sermon-lengths to your folks' requirement. Preach to fulness, not to satiety.

(3) *Concerning the preaching of other people's sermons.* This is a habit only too easily acquired, and very hard to break through. Certain things are clear. One, that you should avoid the sermons advertised at so much per discourse as you would avoid poison. Another, that before you "read up" for your preaching and possibly look at what others have preached or written on your subject, you should be careful to draw out your own thoughts. And yet another, that you should always try to preach your own sermons, and not those of other people with altered text and trimmings. Let them suggest thoughts and ideas if you will, but don't preach them as if they were your own. Don't plough with other men's heifers. If you do you will have the heart-ache sooner or later.

I am not clear as to the advantage of reading a printed sermon in the pulpit, though some of our Bishops have recommended the practice, and the Books of Homilies are quoted in support of it. But the practice might become too permanent, whilst the Homilies were intended for a less advanced and edu-

cated ministry than that of our own day. No! a living freshness of teaching gives the best promise of freshness of life in the taught.

(4) One word as to *delivery*. Be natural, but be lively. Don't "call paralysis to the aid of piety." You need not be afraid of being "preached bare to your very sexton" by your more voluble and vehement Nonconformist neighbour, if you will only let what is in you come out of you in a way of animated action but not artificial stageyness.

And now one parting thought in connexion with this most important subject.

Be assured that all your preaching will be utterly vain unless it is begun, carried on, and followed up by Prayer—Prayer for, Prayer to, God the Holy Ghost.

If He alone can make a minister, He alone can make that minister a preacher, a prophet. Prayer is power. For prayer can bring down "the tongue of fire," that heaven-born speech which is conviction, and comfort, and life.

Wait then, wait daily, wait perseveringly—for the Promise of the Father, and you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Steep your sermon-seed in Prayer. Would you be preachers after God's own heart? Then realise your position as ambassadors for Christ. Get your message *from* God. Give out your message as *for* God and *before* Him, the "Unseen Audience" the Unerring Awarder of success.

Carry back your message in prayer *to* God, and leave results with Him.

"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Give thyself wholly to them, that thy profit-ing may appear unto all.....in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, 16.)

## LECTURE III.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN: HIS VISITING.

IN my last Lecture I pointed out that any Scriptural conception of the ministerial office must have regard to these three matters, *διδάσκειν, ποιμαίνειν, διακονεῖν*. I dwelt then on the first of these, in so far as it is connected with your pulpit ministrations.

To-day the second, the *ποιμαίνειν*, claims our attention. I wish to speak of the Country Clergyman in relation more especially to *Pastoral Work*.

Not that preaching does not properly belong to this. It is included in it as the less is in the greater. Indeed it has been truly said that “a minister is nowhere more a Pastor than when he is in the pulpit.” But you cannot confine yourselves to that, or to your study in preparation for it. The Pastorate proper under its well-known forms of pastoral oversight, care of souls, and especially parochial visitation must be minded.

You must visit your people if you would bear the names of shepherds over your flocks in any worthy or working sense.

Happily it is a duty—should I not rather call it a privilege?—which is becoming better understood every day, though the necessity for it has not even now dawned on some minds.

There are still some men who shrink from it. Their nervous constitution is so extremely sensitive that they cannot bring themselves to face that ubiquitous trinity of Dirt, Disorder, Disease, which must, they think, inevitably meet them in the Cottage-home.

There are still some men who shirk it. They tell you it is not in their line. They make no plans for it. They let other things take up their time. Perhaps they may go to a person who is very ill, or when urgently summoned to a death-bed. But beyond this there is no recognition of it as an integral part of parochial work.

There are still some men who scamp it. They do visit perhaps, but in a superficial sort of way. They are glad of any excuse to take them off from it, or to send them in another direction. It is a relief to find a door locked, or the broomstick outside, or a wash going on, or to come upon their folk when busy in some other way. They have no heart for it, and drop it whenever they can.

You will hardly, I think, propose any of these as models to yourselves. Nor will you, I trust, be found in that other class, worthier perhaps in some ways, but still not a little mistaken, who decry all Pastoral work,

and can hold to nothing but public preaching and teaching.

They seem to see that these two parts of the ministry are always in rivalry, and therefore think that they are justified in adopting the one rather than the other.

Such men take their cue from the idea that they have formed of a Parish. They look upon it as an audience, a body of hearers, who just require filling up from time to time like rows of barrels in a wine-vault.

But if you are to regard your Parishes as "neighbourhoods," *παροικιαῖ*—as Dean Vaughan puts it, or as families in which you have to carry out in detail the idea of personal Fatherhood or Brotherhood, and if in so doing you are to have respect to each member of the body, you must visit.

And if, moreover, your admitted object is the imparting of knowledge with a view to union with Christ, and if that union is to be proved by the formation of the Christ-like character, then must there be something more than bare preaching. The public presentation of truth must be supplemented by dealing in private. And what does this imply if not Pastoral Visitation?

The neglect of it from whatever cause has led, is leading, to very serious results.

We complain of the deadness, hardness, dulness of the agricultural poor; of their neglect of public worship, of their apathy and indifference, their immorality, their

inaccessibility,—but I believe that if a spiritual census could be taken, and the causes of these evils justly and adequately probed, not a few would be found to arise from the lack or the inefficiency of the Pastoral supervision. It is the very backbone of ministerial usefulness.

Think for a little how its *importance* is pressed upon you.

(1) Take first the witness of Scripture. Neither the Old nor New Testament is a dumb oracle here. The one insists that an altar-serving ministry shall be a soul-seeking ministry.

The other insists that the duty of visiting shall go hand-in-hand with that of preaching. In the first place, as S. Augustine says, “Norma Christi nobis proponitur, normam Christi vobis proponite.” There is no greater Johannine “I AM” than that one “I AM the Good Shepherd.” Then the lip of S. Peter echoes what the ear of S. Peter received,—“Feed the flock, take the oversight thereof.” And S. Paul is no whit behind in idea or example when he says,—“He gave some—pastor-teachers” (Eph. iv), and declares “I have showed you and taught you publicly, and from house to house.” (Acts xx. 20.)

(2) Take next our Ordinal, and observe the great stress laid on this department of ministerial labour. “Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to use both public and private monitions and exhortations as

well to the sick as to the whole within your Cures, as need shall require and occasion shall be given?" And again, "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves...and to make yourselves...wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?"

(3) Take again the stated aim and object of the Pastorate. It emphasises the point still more. The Pastor-Teacher is "given" (we are told) "for ( $\pi\rho\delta s$ ) the equipment of the saints with a view to ( $eis$ ), the work of the ministry on their part, and the consequent edifying of the Body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). Your work, therefore, is, I repeat, not only saving but formative; not only winning but educating; not only a looking to the rescue of souls, but to their health, their progress, the development of their infinite possibilities.

(4) Take, once more, the relation of Pastoral work to the pulpit.

This will give you another proof of its importance, and cause you to magnify its office.

Mr Phillips Brooks, who is by no means inclined to underrate the influence of preaching, has spoken these weighty words:

"The duty of making yourself acceptable to people, and winning by all manly ways their confidence in you, and in the truth which you tell, is one that is involved in the very fact of your being a Preacher. It follows from this that the work of the Pastor and Preacher really belong together, and ought not to be separated....

The two things are not two but one....There may be Preachers here and there with such a deep, intense, insight into the general humanity, that they can speak to men without knowing to whom they speak. Such Preachers are very rare, and other Preachers who have not their power trying to do it are sure to preach to some unreal, unhuman men of their own imagination....The Preacher needs to be Pastor that he may preach to real men. The Pastor needs to be Preacher that he may keep the dignity of his work alive. The Preacher who is not a Pastor grows remote. The Pastor who is not a Preacher grows petty. Never be content to let men truthfully say of you, 'He is a Preacher but no Pastor,' or 'He is a Pastor but no Preacher.' Be both: for you cannot really be the one unless you are also the other."

Yes! *the Parish feeds the Pulpit.*

It will furnish you, on the one hand, with subjects to be handled as you go from house to house, from case to case, from character to character. It will do more; for it will furnish you with living illustrations in the handling of religious conditions and experiences drawn from typical instances.

On the other hand it will bring your people to hear you, as the "house-going minister makes the Church-going people." It will familiarise them with your way of putting things. You will speak with no strange, stammering tongue to them; neither will you speak

parables which pass their understanding. It will add force, because it will add reality, to doctrine, exhortation, and reproof. If your pulpit is to be a power, you must read men as well as books. You must take stock of their tastes, their habits, their ways of thinking. Otherwise you will only put forth platitudes, fire blank cartridge, and pour water upon stones. In proportion as Pastoral work suffers, so does Pulpit matter.

And, one thing more. As you go from your parish to your pulpit, so will you go from your pulpit to the parish, and follow up your preaching. You will from time to time want to know which shot has struck, and where. This does not mean that you go here and there to ask how your sermon was liked, but to see how far it was understood, how far it *told*.

You cannot reckon upon high intelligence, even if you have succeeded in penetrating the crust of apathy. Probably you will be somewhat mortified to find how little was taken in, and how that little was sometimes mistaken. But you will learn some useful, if humbling lessons, as to the truths, or subjects, which really stir the interest of your people, as to the best way of putting those truths before them, as to the sides on which you can best approach them.

But for all this there must be diligent, continuous, self-denying, Parochial Visitation ; and where Scripture, and Ordinal, and object, and usefulness, are thus all at

one, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the place which Pastoral work should hold.

II. *But what is its precise nature?* One word describes it, as I have said :  $\pi\omega\mu\alpha\nu\varepsilon\iota\nu$  =shepherding.

But that one word includes much. It not only implies that you “seek for Christ’s sheep which are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world,” but that you are to see to everything of a direct or subsidiary sort, which may tend towards their being “saved through Christ for ever.”

You are in short to be living incarnations of Ps. xxiii. As Vinet puts it, “all that relates to the material, moral, and spiritual interests of your people will be your care.” For a true shepherding implies more than the provision of pasture. There is guarding and guiding, as well as rescuing and ruling.

Now have we any distinct rules laid down for this Pastoral work ?

In God’s word comparatively few. For the Pastoral Epistles deal more with the personality of the Pastor than with his work. They supply principles rather than details. Of other writings perhaps there is no lack. Sets of rules are furnished in most books which treat of the Christian Ministry. I do not say of these what has been said by a late writer that “they have the fault which belongs to all books on behaviour. They are needless for those who behave well, they are useless for those who do not.” But I would deprecate the use

of them after a literal, servile, unadaptive sort. I would rather have you think out certain Apostolic principles.

(a) Chiefest among these is *the duty of individualising*. You are "to warn every man, to teach every man."

In this lies the great distinction between the Pastorate and the Pulpit. The one deals with the plural, the other with the singular, the one with the body, the other with the members.

You do well to bear this in mind. Men are not saved in the mass. Generalities are the death of other things besides prayer. Aimless arrow-flights seldom hit the mark. No wise physician contents himself with opening his medicine-chest, however well fitted, well-arranged, and correctly labelled, and bidding his patients help themselves. The first lesson in the arithmetic of heaven is the importance of the *unit*. "There is joy... over one." Not a little is to be learnt from our Lord's tender and loving action towards the blind man whom the Jews cast out. Jesus heard, sought, found, revealed Himself, cheered, attached. That work in private was the winning of a soul. It was a model piece of shepherding, and the fittest preface to the after discourse as to true shepherds.

*Single men out.* There is something very persuasive in this. It implies personal concern and prepares the way for the message. It disarms opposition. It melts down prejudice. It removes the instinctive shrinking from touch.

Moreover the message itself comes with tenfold greater force when the hearer is shut up to the conviction that it is for him ; not for the many, not for the crowd in which he has been accustomed to hide himself but for him—the one. And you have got some way towards a result when conscience backs up his conviction with “Thou art the man;” or when the drooping spirit is brought to hear and appropriate the individual address, —“I loved *thee* and gave Myself for *thee*.” Thus you can focalise the rays of truth, and give them a definite bearing. Then the ice is dissolved and the fire is kindled.

Individualise ! It has been truly said that “our Lord would condemn the society of the day because it is the grave and not the nurse of Individuality.” Might He not also condemn the Church and her ministers for their inaction in certain places, seeing that an “inerasable Individualism lies at the root of Christianity.”

Let me say here that we of the Country Parishes have far greater opportunity for this necessary duty than our brethren in the towns. We shall best carry it out by giving diligent heed to the visitation of the several members of a flock whether they be whole or sick. Each class has its special claim.

I. *There must be visitation of the whole.* In a normally stratified parish you will find these arranged in the three several groups of (1) Gentry, (2) Farmers, (3) Labourers.

(a) The first, no doubt, present the greatest difficulty. It is not everybody who possesses the needful boldness, or the needful wisdom for approaching them. The art of drawing-room preaching is the gift of the few. And so it comes to pass only too often that the Pastor's visit degenerates into a mere morning-call with all its conventionalities, dashed here and there perhaps with a faint tinge of the spiritual.

You must not however give them up. Be true to yourselves, true to your Master, and your richer parishioners will come to understand that you wish to be true to them. Bishop Wilkinson of Truro has set us all an excellent example in this matter. He would, when in London, call from time to time on his upper-class parishioners and take pains to let them know that he and his helpers were their servants for Christ's sake.

You can do the same in the country. Nor will your efforts be fruitless. If you are men of tact as well as men of heart you will be more welcome oftentimes than you suppose yourselves to be. There is many a door which, though it will not open of its own accord, needs but a gentle push to open it. Many a sore heart and burdened conscience, aye, and many an apparently careless and unconcerned soul, is longing for instruction and comfort, and for the rest which its society can never give. It will not seek but it may be sought. Hearts will open to opened hearts. Ever

remember that your squire and his family have souls with their special difficulties, and that the winning of them may lead to the winning of many more. I speak what I know.

Amongst other means of reaching the upper classes the following have been found useful. (1) Drawing-room Bible Readings to which friends and neighbours of the same social standing are invited. (2) Sunday or week-day Bible classes for the children held either at the clergyman's house or their own. (3) Correspondence. A wise angler puts the quill above the hook. A letter may reach where an interview with spoken word cannot be had.

Connected with this class is one which will call for much thought,—perhaps much uneasy thought,—I mean the servants belonging to the establishment at the Park or Hall. They have it in their power to make a very pandemonium of your parish, or contrariwise to prove a real blessing by their example.

The question is how to get at them. You can indeed have them largely in your mind when you are preaching, and can follow them with your many prayers. But can you do anything more than this?

You cannot visit them exactly on the same lines as your other folks. Their occupations will hardly admit of this. But you can watch for occasions. Confirmation seasons: the sickness of any member of the household: the loan of books (of course with the consent of the

master or mistress): a few words with the footman or groom who comes down to the Rectory with a message, can all be turned to account. Sometimes you will be able to enlist a Sunday-school teacher from amongst them whose influence will be very helpful. And I have heard of such a thing as a prayer-meeting held with the servants before the establishment left for the season, and of its being greatly appreciated.

If however you wish to gain and keep up a wholesome influence in the servants-hall, be very careful as to your manner and your talk when you call, when you go to spend the afternoon, when you dine. Eyes and ears are very open then. They will look at you and listen to you when you are out of the pulpit to know what you mean when you are in it. They may be won. Nero's household is not the only one which has had Christians in it.

(β) The visitation of your middle class people comes next to be dealt with. This has also its peculiar difficulties. Office and shop and farm and factory with all their bustle of business stand greatly in the way of profitable religious intercourse. But even here something may be done. You may often get an opening by taking advantage of special family events, and showing a true and not officious sympathy with them. When the blinds are down or the shutters up; or when the doctor's gig is constantly at the gate, then is your opportunity. At such times you will find your busiest

people singularly open to your loving attention. As a class they are greatly overlooked in matters spiritual. And perhaps with the hardening processes of trade before your eyes many will be thought to be harder, or more worldly than they really are. Do not begin by reckoning them to be such. Try the effect of a kindly interest. If you will only go in Christ's name and carry Christ with you, the visits which commenced with some despondency on your part will come to be as gladdening to you as they are welcome to this section of your flock.

May I add here that I have personally found that a Bible-reading for farmers, their wives and daughters has been much appreciated and much blessed.

(y) To come now to our labouring folk. How are you to bring yourselves and the truth you bring with you to bear upon them in this matter of visitation ?

I venture to make some homely suggestions.

(1) *Be clear as to the fact that they expect to be visited.* On this point they differ from other classes of your parishioners. To them your visit may be comparatively a matter of indifference. It is not so with the labourer. He and his family look upon it as one of their rights, and that not altogether from the "dole" point of view. They like to have you look in if it is only for a chat. Time was, no doubt, when the Parson was to them as a newspaper. They looked to him for the latest tidings. That is altered now when no family with any pretension to be a family is without its "Weekly."

But, news or no news, you are still looked for. In their view your call is as much one of your duties as your sermon. It rests with you to turn it to the best account. You have much in your favour from the fact that you are thus looked for. And you must not be surprised if you are occasionally reminded of this fact by the somewhat reproachful, "Why, Sir, you've been quite a stranger!"

(2) Next be clear as to the fact that *your visits are due to each section of your people* whether Church people or not.

Don't pass by your Dissenters. I know that visits to these are supremely distasteful to some of my brethren. I know also that to others a Dissenter is as a red rag to a bull—a perpetual irritant. But you must bear in mind that the Church of England made Dissent. If in days gone by she had been less of a stepmother she would now have fewer stepsons who profess neither affection nor allegiance.

I will grant that the attitude of Nonconformists is very trying, and especially at this present time when so many attempts are being made to widen the breach. Still you are a debtor to Dissenters in common with other members of your parish. They form part of your cure of souls. And it may be in your case as it has been in others, that you will not only soften down opposition, and remove misconception, but that you will win back those who have left our communion. It

has happened over and over again that want of pulpit-power, or want of pure doctrine, or want of wisdom, or want of consistency on the part of former clergymen has led to perversions and departures which the right action of their successors has been able to alter. Be such successors. Visit all alike.

(3) As another practical suggestion I venture to say—*Get acquainted with your people's habits as to time.*

Many a well-intentioned visit has failed because it was not well-timed. Few folk can listen well when they are on the fidget, and on the fidget they will certainly be if you are not observers of occasions. Consideration and courtesy are good guides here. There are not a few of nature's gentlemen who live in our hamlets and by-ways, and who can appreciate dealings which are of a gentlemanlike sort. Respect their feelings as you would have them respect yours. Be very particular in the matter of meal-times. You may safely make a call when the dinner is over, but beware how you look in too frequently before it is served up.

The best, indeed almost the only, time for the men is the evening when supper is over and the cottage fairly quiet. They may indeed be reached when resting after one of their spells of work, but you cannot well individualise then. Sometimes you can get a friendly chat in the furrow with a man at plough, or going to his pit work, or mending his nets; and the chat if wisely ordered may go a fair way to make him "Bun-

yanise" and draw heavenly lessons from earthly things. But the best time is, as I have said, the evening. You can then get your men more by themselves, and if you like to widen the stream of influence a little you can do what an Essex clergyman once did. He started a system of Evening Pastoral visits in his parish, went the round of his somewhat scattered district house by house, gave each householder leave to ask any friends or neighbours, and so ministered in many small centres with some success.

Your rule then must be to cultivate the "aptissima" as well as the "mollissima tempora fandi." Never neglect the golden gleam of an opportunity; but never forget the force of a genial courtesy. If you can do nothing else than lift the latch as you pass by and "give the seal of the day" something may be done by that. The people feel that they are not forgotten, and they don't forget that.

(4) Then, try to *get acquainted with their habits of thinking on religious subjects.*

Don't label them wrongly. It is a great mistake to suppose that our labourers are largely tainted with scepticism, or standing aloof in sheer Infidelity. Here and there you may come across a man who professes to have doubts. But these are generally put forward to cover some failure in the moral life. In some parishes unhealthy currents of thought are being generated by the efforts of political lecturers who make a religion of

a kind of politics which have no religion about them. Every now and then too you may hear some fluent empty-headed talk against Bibles and parsons due to ignorance of the one, and prejudice against the other. But in spite of all this there is not much aggressive unbelief. The masses of our people may, in a sense, be irreligious but they are not atheistic. Secularism is their chief hindrance in the sense of a mere living for this world, and this in its turn breeds apathy and indifference.

They *think body* for the most part where they think at all. Get them to *think soul*. But remember that where they begin to think soul they think slowly if soundly. They are pretty shrewd logicians, if bad linguists, are more for simplicity than speculation, and like to have truth set before them in a childlike, but not childish, way.

(5) Try further to acquaint yourselves with their ways of speech.

I have said that their vocabulary is not large. It is enough for them that it expresses their wants, and they do not much concern themselves with anything else.

Moreover they have a way of giving a meaning to words which is not always "Websterian" or of common usage. You may make harmful mistakes in your use of them. I once got into serious trouble with a worthy parishioner because when I found her low spirited I

told her husband that I thought she was rather "in the dumps" or "dumpy." They took it as an affront, and both resented the phrase keenly. I was made to know that "dumpiness" according to them meant "laziness," a quality which certainly did not belong to my friend.

Esoteric language is not confined to cultured circles so called. Dialects have a sense and force of their own, and you must study them if you are not to "occupy the seat of the unlearned" in your people's estimation.

I do not, as I have already said, contend for broad Yorkshire, or primitive East Anglian, or the Doric of the West as the staple of your talk, but I do heartily commend to you such speech as shall be "understood of the people."

I will not multiply these suggestions for the visitation of the whole. But I would press these four things upon you.

(1) *Visit on a system, and visit systematically.* Keep if possible a register of visits.

(2) *Make it felt that your visits have a distinct purpose;* that you want to establish a friendship, arouse an interest, manifest sympathy, with a view to re-uniting a broken link, restoring a disturbed current, persuading to rightness of life.

(3) *Carry out as far as possible the Law of Adaptation.* Become all things to all men. Press all things into your service for them, that you may by all means save some.

(4) *Keep your Master and your Master's message ever before you.*

It has been well said that a "real Christian cannot leave his shoes outside the mosque" and so belie, or at least conceal his profession. Therefore your speech about secularities will be seasoned with salt, and seasoning, remember, does not mean solid spoonfuls.

If any man lack wisdom in dealing with the sound and whole, let him ask !

II. I turn now to the *Visitation of the Sick*. This will demand the largest portion of your time and care as Pastors.

I shall not go "in omnia." Manuals abound. "Crutches" are to be found in every corner. But each Shepherd ought to make and carry his own crook. Instructions as to visiting may be well in their way, but, with the exception of some few, the sooner you become independent of them the better. They are apt to hamper, or to confuse; or they fail to touch the point. Too often they are like Saul's armour. You have to say of them, "I cannot go with these." God's word, and, as you go on, your own experience, together with God's Spirit to turn both to account, these will prove your best helps.

I will therefore, as before, only make a few suggestions.

(1) As a general rule you will find it very helpful to *study the character* of your parishioners when they

are well and about. This will enable you to minister to them in sickness with greater precision and effectiveness. You will know their weak and their strong sides, their special temptations, their special hindrances. This will save you a good deal of beating about when time is precious, and strength is small.

(2) *Beware of opiate divinity and Protestant “Extreme Unction.”*

Never be in too great a hurry to minister comfort. Unprobed sores rarely heal up healthily. Untouched sins breed after trouble. Your own hearts will tell you how ready they are to speak peace to themselves. The hearts of your people follow the same bent. If they do not ask you to prophesy deceits they at least ask you to speak smooth things. They prefer the mowing-machine to the ploughshare—a little surface dealing to that which gets down to the root of the evil within them.

With too many a few trite and unmeaning conventionalities are made to pass muster as a respectable Christianity.

There is, however, small chance of a crop unless the fallow-ground is broken up. Set forth the Gospel you must in all its attractiveness and persuasiveness; but the need of that Gospel must first be brought home. You need not be harsh, but you must be honest. You need give no causeless alarm, but you must awaken. The peace which comes after the conflict is worth

more, and lasts longer, than the false security which precedes it.

Don't be satisfied with a few vague, though possibly fervent, exclamations. They are apt to come of untimely soothing, and a too great readiness to administer cordials.

The late Canon Bardsley used to give an instance of this 'ministry of ignorance' in the case of a woman at Manchester. She had been visited by different people and was looked upon as rather a hopeful case. He went to see her. As soon as he got into the room she broke out with;—"Eh minister, Is'e got liberty, I'se got the blessing." Very well, Mary, but can you tell me who the Lord Jesus Christ is? "Nay, mon!" Can you tell me why Jesus Christ died on the Cross? "Nay mon, I'm no schollard." Well, Mary, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He died on the Cross to save sinners—have you any sins? "Eh! mon! but thee'd better be gettin' doon stairs; I doon't like thee talk!"

The inference is easy. Use the probe. A sound repentance is the sister grace of a saving faith. Be encouraging if you will, but be true.

(3) Always *try to get some truth, definite truth, lodged in the minds or hearts of your sick people.* It may be only a fragment of that revelation with which you are entrusted (and indeed their state may often-times be such that no more than a fragment can be set

before them) but try to get that home. It is bit by bit work at the best, and one which demands extreme patience. Do not therefore try to impart a whole 'Body of Divinity' at one or at the most two, visits. Be content to leave behind you either an arrow of anguish or a thought of power. But always let it be something which the mind can grasp and which can be turned over to profit. If you will but remember how small a part of a sermon only takes hold, you will not expect more at a sick visit. Each separate visit ought to leave its mark.

Be careful, however, on one point. Whilst you wish to leave your one portion of truth in as concise and short a form as may be, *don't be in a hurry*. Hastiness and curtness give the impression that you are wanting in sympathy, and this is fatal to usefulness. Don't be over-long.

If possible *think out* your subject before you go. I need not say that this demands preparation: but then nothing is likely to succeed in the sick room any more than in the sermon, if this be lacking.

(4) Put aside the notion *that you can deal with all your sick people on the same lines*. Avoid a too servile use of the Form for the Visitation of the Sick. Apart from the fact that people dislike the use of a book, you must remember that it was drawn up as a help for non-preaching ministers. It may suggest thoughts; it must not supersede your thinking.

There is no such thing as a stereotyped method. You must vary your treatment. Each case is a study in itself. It is true that you have in effect but one great Remedy. You will, however, in prescribing it seek out the greatest possible number of combinations. St Paul ever and always preached Christ, but in what very different ways did he set Him forth before his various hearers. There was no monotony if there was sameness of truth. Unity of subject, but diversity of presentation—this must be your aim.

You will find this principle especially needful in ministering to the several classes of your sick.

(a) There are the *chronic* cases which call, if not for frequent, yet for regular visiting. You should treat these not so much with isolated texts and passages as with continuous breadths of Scripture. An Epistle or a selection of Psalms, carefully expounded, with due consideration for the time and powers of the sick persons, will be found helpful both to pastors and patients. It will lead them to look at what is coming; it will suggest questions; it will keep interest alive. It will help you to instruct on a broader basis, and give you margin and material for unfolding the deeper truths of God. This will help in various ways. For a Christ more fully seen is a Christ more fully embraced and lived. Your teaching in these cases is not only received but repeated to others, and those sick rooms become very centres of blessing to

those who come and go. You speak through one to many.

You will not neglect due preparation for Holy Communion or the regular administration of it, especially in the case of the aged and infirm.

(3) Then as to *those who are extremely reserved and hard to get at*. They are not apathetic, but simply shut up. You speak, but you get the shortest of answers. You read, but cannot elicit a remark. Try this plan. Throw your intended teaching into the prayer which you offer. You speak very effectually to your sick ones or sorrowing ones when you are speaking to God for them. Their character, their state, their difficulties, their wants, can all be unwound before them, whilst you can at the same time, and in the same prayer bring out that truth which may be more especially suitable. This process will often unlock the heart and unseal the lip; only be careful not to pray *at* your people when you pray *for* them. Vary your methods. If any desire "to open their griefs," be careful not to go beyond the Formularies of our Church. Encourage manliness. Use straightforward common sense and earnest prayer.

(5) Lastly, I would say *do not hamper yourselves with the feeling that you must get through so many visits in each day*.

You are told that on the average you can pay from 6 to 10; and you may honestly propose to yourselves

that this average shall be kept up. But hindrances will crop up, and your hearts may go down because the full tale is not rendered.

Do remember that it is not the quantity but the quality of the visits which tells. Measure your work as God measures it—by its possibilities. You serve no hard Master. He is always ready to approve of efforts in little, and to accept the desires for more, when the efforts are real, and the desires genuine. “She hath done what she could.” That is the stamp to have. He who measures life by love, measures work by the heart thrown into it. Do what you can.

So far then would I make suggestion. Other suggestions of greater value will be found in such books as Vinet’s Pastoral Theology, with its appendix of Bengel’s “Thoughts on the Exercise of the Ministry;” and the admirable addresses of my predecessors in these Courses.

I will only add here a few illustrations of methods which have been successfully used in dealing with certain difficult cases.

(1) *The obstinate rejecter* can be overcome by persevering kindness. Twenty-seven times was a Bedfordshire clergyman forbidden to come up into the room of a sick man. All he could do was to speak and pray at the bottom of the stairs. But this kindly patience prevailed, and on the twenty-eighth visit the invitation came in the broken words, “Please, Sir, do

come up. Pardon all my resistance. Tell me more of that truth which you have so perseveringly brought me."

(2) *Self-righteousness and self-satisfaction* very often present an all-but impenetrable barrier to our efforts.

But I remember how a friend once broke down all the self-righteous defences of a parishioner. He read and explained to her Romans iv. 5, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." He then got her to promise that she would read it over daily for a week. She did so. And her first remark to him as he came in was this, "Ah, Sir, I could not stand against that word. I see it all now." Yes! she saw that she must be justified as ungodly or not at all. That Word did its Work.

(3) And the power of the Word aptly chosen and confidently used as God's own weapon in the hand of the Holy Ghost is nowhere more strikingly exhibited than in the case of *Infidels*. It is true that these are not to be found in every Country Parish. But cases do occur. And in the present set of the times with its varying currents of thought they will probably occur more frequently.

It may be well therefore to bear the following incident in mind. A clergyman in Yorkshire had to visit a young man who professed to hold infidel opinions. He was received with any thing but welcome. Seeing how matters stood he very wisely

refrained from saying much, but after a few kind words, read part of John iii., touching the need of heart change, prayed, and left. Going the next day he was surprised to find that, instead of the hard look and bitter words which he expected, there was nothing but gentleness. The young man gave the reason, as he said:—"I wish to be honest with you, Sir, and to say that I hated the very idea of your coming, and was determined that, if you began to argue with me about my opinions, and *to use your own words* in doing so, I would resist with all my power. But that Word of God disarmed me. I cannot resist that. Please sit down and tell me what it all means." My friend did so to his saving.

(4) Not a few of us find that *immorality of life* is especially difficult to deal with either in the way of reproof or renewal.

But I have known great good to ensue from "the gentleness of loving correction." A clergyman in Suffolk had occasion to deal with one of his farmers, a leading man in his parish, on this ground. He called to speak to him about it and found by the man's look that he was quite aware of the object of his visit. There was an evident bracing-up for opposition. But my friend very tenderly addressed himself to the man's heart as a sinning man wishful to be helpful to a fellow sinner. He so touched the springs of right feeling that the man utterly broke down. And he who had deter-

mined, as he said afterwards, to knock my friend down if he had spoken in the way of stern reproof, was after no very long interval brought as a humble penitent to the Saviour's feet, and became a very right hand in the parish.

(5) May I add one instance to show that even *idiots and imbecile people* are not unreachable? A Worcestershire clergyman was visiting a farmer's wife in her last illness. In the room there was always a poor half-witted cousin who simply sat there, took no apparent notice, never spoke, and never was spoken to. The farmer's wife died without much sign of hopeful departure. A few months afterwards my curate-friend was called to see this cousin. Then he found that the words which had seemed to pass over the heart of his patient without any apparent effect had, by God's grace, taken deep root in the heart of this unthought-of one. She could give a clear account of her faith and the ground of it, and passed rejoicingly into the kingdom.

Do not then despair of any case, hardened rejecter, self-righteous, unbelieving, immoral, ignorant. Difficulties are not impossibilities. "With God all things are possible."

And now I would wind up these thoughts on this department of your Pastoral Work—this Visitation of the Sick and of the whole—by asking you to bear in mind that solemn injunction in the Ordinal—"Be diligent."

(1) Be diligent in realising your responsibility to God and to your flock.

You will have a cure of souls. You have to care for them as Christ's sheep. At your hand they will be required, and the charge of blood-guiltiness is much more easily incurred than answered.

(2) Be diligent in seeking to discharge that responsibility, and that by watching for opportunities, making due preparation, drawing your reading, your observation, your experience this one way, commanding yourselves to your people by truth of doctrine and truth of life, approaching them with sympathy, following them up with perseverance. Then by your hand they may be presented faultless before the throne, and prove your "joy and crown of rejoicing."

(3) Be diligent above all things in prayer. Efforts only are yours, success is God's. But He gives to those who ask. If the word be true that "Habenti dabitur," it is no less true that "Petenti dabitur."

Pray for your people in the spirit of the Lincolnshire pastor whom C. Tennyson Turner has thus described:

#### THE PASTOR'S PRAYER.

At dawn, he marks the smoke among the trees,  
From hearths to which his daily footsteps go ;  
And hopes and fears and ponders on his knees,  
If his poor sheep will heed his voice or no ;  
What wholesome turn will Ailsie's sorrow take ?  
Her latest sin will careless Annie rue ?

Will Robin now, at last, his wiles forsake?  
Meet his old dupes, yet hold his balance true?  
He prays at noon, with all the warmth of heaven  
About his heart, that each may be forgiven;  
He prays at eve; and through the midnight air  
Sends holy ventures to the throne above;  
His very dreams are faithful to his prayer,  
And follow, with closed eyes, the path of love.

Seek, then, the special presence and power of the Holy Ghost. He only can reach those distant hearts, touch those hard hearts, open those closed hearts. He only can give the word of wisdom, the word in season. He only can strengthen you when you are weak, uphold you when cast down, protect you when in danger through temptation. He only can bless both your preparation and your perseverance. He only can fill you with that love of Christ which will constrain you to serve with all serving, and prove a living force for the hearts of others.

Seek the Lord and His Strength, and be diligent in the seeking.

All this, you say, will involve much thought, much pains, much self-denial. I know it. But I know also that you will not be unwilling to take as one of your life-mottoes that of St Martin of Tours:—“*Non recuso laborem.*”

## LECTURE IV.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN: HIS EDUCATIONAL WORK.

I MEET you to-day with another aspect of your Pastoral Work. It is that of shepherding by teaching—the combination of the *διδάσκειν* and *ποιμαίνειν*. For the clergyman in the country, as elsewhere, is to be, if anything, a Pastor-Teacher.

I would speak therefore of your Educational Work, *more especially amongst the young of your flocks*. Our Master summons you very particularly to this when He places it in the first third of the Great Commission, “Feed my lambs.”

I am not going to present you with a Manual of Education, nor am I going to discuss the many theories connected with it, no!—nor even to ventilate the question of “Free Education” and the like. You can read of these things elsewhere, and make up your minds about them, as you are distinctly called to do.

I shall confine myself, as before, to the practical dealing with the subject.

I. I beg you then first of all, *to get a clear and definite idea as to what you have to do.*

Don't run away with the notion that it means going to your Parochial School so many hours in the week to pour out a certain amount of teaching-talk, to deal with a certain number of minds more or less stony and impenetrable. This will come in its time. And it will depend in part upon your efforts as to how far the said stones shall be penetrated.

But you have something higher than that to aim at. These children, who will form part of your charge, are not to be regarded as mere reading machines, or treasures of texts, but as centres of living forces. They have to be trained, as well as taught in the common acceptation of that term. You have to develope human faculties and human life in contact with God and His truth.

The process which ordinarily goes by the name of Education is worth supremely little unless it turns out intelligent and conscientious citizens, loyal subjects, honest workers, dependable servants, good and true men and women. These are its proper results. They may not be "results" in the secondary and "Inspec-torial" sense of the word, but they are; nevertheless, the only true and trustworthy results.

"We do not want," as Dean Burgon tells us, "a merely intellectual development, or an exclusive devotion to their Biblical instruction apart from moral

restraints which will leave our girls dressy, pert, and bold...our boys restless, inattentive, insubordinate, and claiming the utmost amount of license—boys and girls alike conceited, self-sufficient and ready to take offence ...formidable when they leave us...of small comfort whilst they stay."

Settle it, therefore, in your minds that you are debtors in a special sense to the young people in your villages in this matter of true Education.

And this for these several reasons.

(1) Because *they will always form a large proportion of your charge.*

Their numbers indeed will vary with the varying circumstances of the parish. Sometimes you will have a considerable body of young married couples with increasing families: sometimes adults will preponderate. But at no time will there be wanting successions of small people in sufficient numbers to demand attention.

(2) They claim your efforts, *because of their coming influence.* The children of to-day are "our kings to be." "The forces that are destined to move mankind are at this moment being prepared in our schools and homes."

The future of our country, of our Church, will lie largely in their hands. They are the rills which will become the rivers, and it depends very much on present dealing whether their force and flow shall run in safe channels to gladden and fertilise all that they come

near, or whether they shall be left to burst their banks, and carry confusion and ruin in their overflow.

(3) Once more they claim your thought *because it is so much in the power of your hand to mould them.*

You have not merely the call, but the encouragement to obey the call. I know that, on the one hand, you have no right to usurp the place of the parents and interfere with their special province. "They ought to see to this moral training of their children." Yes! but do they? The answer in only too many cases must be, "No! they don't." They leave the children to be their own teachers. Or they let them learn in the street-school and any devil's playground that they like to take to. The field therefore is a pretty open one for you to occupy.

Then, on the other hand, you yourselves may say— "Our influence at the best can be but small, for our opportunities are so few and so short." No! not few, not short, if you will only use them aright.

When once you have realised that the formation of character is to be your great aim in dealing with them, you will not only bend your various instructions that way, but you will be ingenious to find out methods of leading them to those acts which form habits, those habits which form character.

It is not the mere, though constant, action of sun and shower which ministers to the development of a plant. The subsidiary agencies of shelter, and weeding,

and tying, and destruction of vermin-pests have no little do do with it.

You start with a prejudice in your favour. The children will take to you naturally if they see you willing to take to them. They will lean upon you, and look up to you. And if you will but act the part of wise gardeners for those little soul-gardens you will find no small response to your pains.

In addition to your direct teachings you can suggest a thought here, check a vicious growth there, encourage in the right and true, counteract evil influences which may be at work. I repeat that you have much in your power.

A finger under the chin, a friendly hand on the shoulder, a steady look into the eyes, a quiet walk, a short chat on the way home, will often straighten and strengthen a young life, and go much further than perpetual preaching.

You doubtless know the saying “scratch the green rind of a sapling or wantonly twist it in the soil,—the seared and crooked trunk will tell of thee for centuries to come.” The converse of this is true also. You can do much if you have only the mind to do it. You can teach your infant Hercules to strangle some serpents in the cradle, and so give promise of killing Hydras in due time.

At all events you may be encouraged by the fact that your influence in the matter of true education is

acknowledged on all sides. If Archdeacon Blunt can describe the clergy as the best kind of “national police” in view of their efforts as educators, Mr Mundella, no mean judge, can say that the clergy of the Church of England are the best friends of Education, whilst the Edinburgh Review declares it to be “a strange thing that the Church of England should be threatened with Disestablishment in the zenith of her utility.” “It mentions, amongst other claims to favourable consideration that the clergy have placed themselves at the head of the work of National Education and are only too eager in the cause.”

For these reasons then you must bring yourselves to bear both directly and indirectly on your young people,—directly through your own personal intercourse,—indirectly through the labours of others.

## II. Now as to the *places where and the methods by which this education is to be carried on.*

(A) Your thoughts will naturally turn to your Village schools, and to the Day-school first. That is one of your seed-plots for eternity, as well as one of your training-grounds for time. What are you to do there?

First, be sure that you go there. The door stands open for you, as well as for the children and their paid teachers.

There are some who cannot see this. They admit that they were ordained to preach and visit, but fail to

see that the teaching of the young is included in their office, and demanded by it.

This, however, will not be your case. You will gladly take up the crook, and go after the lambs. You will not plead inexperience, or unfitness, or downright dislike.

Let me offer you a few suggestions.

(a) I will suppose that you go to your parish with but little teaching-experience or none, though in these days this should seldom be the case. You feel that though you are pretty well up in the subjects which you would like to teach, you will only make a muddle when you attempt to impart. You will confuse: you will lead to mistakes: in short, you will spoil a class, not by your ignorance, but by your incompetence.

If this is your fear let me advise you to drop all teaching for a time, and go down to your school as a learner. Don't be too proud to sit and mark how your master or mistress go to work. Study their methods.

They have had some little instruction at all events in the art of teaching, whilst you have had none. It does not follow that you need copy all their ways; certainly not all their ways of imparting religious instruction; but you will be able to pick up some hints which will be of the utmost value to you when you really begin to teach. It is not everybody who knows how to "fetch the pump."

(β) Let me suggest that whether you go to your

Parish schools as Vicars or Curates, you should make a point, and a great point too, of proper discipline.

I have been fairly astonished when going into certain schools to find how the "Lords of Misrule," not to say the "Ladies," abound.

This need not be, and *is* not, where your teachers have any right idea of what is due to themselves, their children, and their work. Nor need it be a matter of cowing or scaring into submission. The reign of law should never be a reign of terror, when you take a class. A proper firmness combined with gentleness will go a long way towards producing the desired end. Children will mind when they see that the teacher is one who must be minded. They will ride rough-shod over a weak pleadingness just as they will cease to care for an intermittent irritability. They will respect a loving but determined enforcement of order. You can do nothing without it. And it will be well if you can get the sister graces of politeness and proper deference to authority to go hand in hand with your discipline. The one will make your teaching easier on its merely physical side, the others will tend to make it more effective as disposing the children to greater attention.

(γ) I should like next to say a few words on the *matter and manner of your Day-school instruction.*

In the country it need not be only and always Biblical. For there, at least, you can find time for sundry secularities. Amongst these be sure to make

a place for helping your children to *intelligent reading*. The want of this is a leading vice in most of our country schools.

The thing is not naturally in the material, and the teacher is not always bright enough or brisk enough to make the reading lessons a delight. He is only too glad at times to get through the appointed 15 or 20 or 30 minutes in the dullest of all dull ways. Not a question is asked. Hardly a word is explained. No illustrations are given. There is no correction of mistakes, no attention to pronunciation. The children are suffered to read each his or her one sentence. The first part is delivered in a monotone—and such a monotone! the last four or five words four or five notes below. You are irresistibly reminded of a bird scared off her nest, flying round at a certain height from the ground, and then dropping into its nest again.

How can any interest be excited either in the subject or in the process undergone to—dare I say?—master it? And what wonder is it if as soon as the very short school curriculum is over, all, or nearly all, reading is dropped, simply because there is no relish for it?

May I suggest then that you should take a class occasionally, whether in History, or Geography, or the ordinary lesson book, and “aérate” the reading?

Drop the one-sentence plan altogether. Help the lame ones by reading their portion first, and then make

them read it after you. See that they grasp the meaning of words. Question freely. Illustrate wherever you can—and the oftener you can do this from your own history and experience the better. Draw pictures on slate or black-board where you can of the things they read about, or of which you have to tell them. And when the lesson is drawing to a close let the books be shut and the subject told out in their own way and words.

They will look upon you as a real deliverer for helping them through the drudgery of a bad half-hour. And by this and similar processes you will promote the budding intelligence which will be no small help when you come to the Religious Instruction.

(δ) One more point connected with your secular teaching I feel inclined to urge. It is this, that you should encourage the art of composition.

Writing makes the exact man, and something more. It makes the interesting man. Anything that you can do to improve the usual style of correspondence which absent sons and daughters too often inflict on their home-folk would be a great boon to the latter.

It can be done by getting your young people to write abstracts, and letters *in* school; and *out* of it answers to such questions as you may like to give them weekly on any subject you have read together. I cannot hold out the hope that all your scholars will turn out such ingenious essays as those which Mr

Barker has lately given to the world in his "*Original English.*" Nor do I ask you to go the length of setting such subjects as "Describe fully the Chordæ Tendineæ of the heart." But I do know that our children can be brought to express themselves with no small vigour and readiness. Moreover, you can by this means get some "peeps on paper" into their inner minds and see how they are shaping themselves,—a matter which will give some directness to your personal dealing with them.

But I pass from all this to say a few words as to your main work in the Day-school, viz. the *Religious Instruction.*

See to it for one thing that it be instruction. See to it for another that it be religious. For there is a good deal that goes by these names which can hardly be said to deserve them. Heart is too often sacrificed to head, and facts are accumulated to the exclusion of the doctrines based upon them.

Your first care therefore will be that your children shall have something which they can understand and lay up in store. Put this before them in such a form that, by God's grace, it may fructify in their lives. Teach them to feel that they have not only to do with the Bible, in the sense of reading it, but that the Bible has to do with them, in the sense of shaping them.

Your time with them it is true is but short, but it need not be a time of task either to you or to them.

Always make what preparation you can. Be punctual to your regulation half-hour. Take good care that it is not curtailed at either end by the exigencies of a too rigorously interpreted Time-table, or the teacher's not unnatural wish to have a few more minutes for more paying subjects. Bear in mind that for some of the children this may be your only chance of getting at them, as not being Sunday scholars also. Throw yourself heart and soul into your subject, whether it be the Bible or the Liturgy, Catechism, Articles or Church History. For there need be no sameness. You need not now confine yourselves as people did in the old days to a few incidents in the Old Testament and the Gospel histories in the New. Our Diocesan Education Committees and their Inspectors give a wide but safe range, which embraces all needful points, and can be fairly mastered during a child's school life. Be bright and cheery so that your class may see that there is something that happifies you in the thing you teach. Never let your children go without driving home some truth or duty.

It may seem a matter-of-course counsel that you should teach your children texts. Many of us, I am afraid, neglect this, and so miss a great opportunity of storing some vacant minds, and furnishing them with sling-stones against temptation, and support for their coming times of trial. There are texts which take hold.

I need hardly point out the necessity of a few

prefatory words of prayer; of reverent demeanour; of a loving spirit.

Many a Bible lesson falls utterly flat, even if there is no worse consequence, if sharp correction, perhaps not always called for, is found to mingle with the gentler voices of the truth which you explain. Children are proverbially quick at drawing certain conclusions. They look from the voice to the hands. A combination of Jacob and Esau is not to their thinking either attractive or influential for good. Keep your temper. Be real. Plough in hope. Sow in hope. Your clean seed will in God's good time produce its clean corn.

Do you ask how often you should go to your Dayschool, or what hours you should choose for the Religious Instruction?

No hard and fast line can be drawn. Some clergymen can get to their school every day. But this is not the case with all. Twice a week is a fair average. Once a week should be the minimum.

As to times I am inclined to think that if you can be present at the opening of the school and secure the needful half-hour directly after this, that would be best. The children are then at their freshest, and you make a good start for the day.

If you can, always get a class-room for your work. It puts you on a family footing, prevents distraction, helps towards personal dealing.

Give then some of your best to your Day-school. Don't grudge the time given. If I remember rightly Prof. Blunt used to say of the school that it was not only the "clergyman's right hand," but the "savings-bank for his spare minutes." You will gain more than you lose.

Not a few honest, painstaking labourers in this portion of God's field have been told years after how their labours were appreciated. "I gave you a lot of trouble, Sir. But it wasn't all thrown away. I have to thank you for what you did for me at school."

(B) It will be convenient here to say a few words about Night- or Evening- schools as centres of education. Though their day may seem to have passed in some places owing to the modern "advancement of learning" they are still a power. Nay they are likely to be still more so if the proposed schemes for "continuation" or "recreation" schools are carried out.

After some 40 years' experience of them in their ordinary phase I can speak of them as a most distinctly useful parish instrument. If it were only for the humanising process which goes forward in them they ought to be maintained. But they do more than humanise. Not a few lads owe their present good positions in life to them, and to them also not a few older men owe their helping forward to life spiritual.

I shall not readily forget my first essay in a sea-board parish with a class of three old men of the

respectable ages of seventy and upwards; nor their humble petition for spectacles because the letters made their eyes "run so;" nor their diligent attention; nor the pleasant sight, after a time, of one of them, an old smuggler, sitting in his window, reading the Bible for which he had not before cared, and preparing for the service which before he had rarely attended—I trust a changed man in all respects.

I need say nothing more as to their importance.

Two points connected with their working call for a little attention.

(1) Try and keep your ages separate.

Boys and adults don't combine well. Never put a dull man with a class of lads. You might as well put him into a nest of hornets. He does not so much mind being stupid with others of his own standing who may not be stupidities.

I have found it possible to make three divisions. The lads up to 16 went to the school where the master taught them. A second brigade of lads and young men from 16 to 25 went to my Squire's house and were taught by his family, whilst I had the married men and all others above 25 at the Rectory. Many of each class, though they never passed an Inspector's examination, have "taken their degree" successfully, and much of this was owing to the quiet enjoyed.

(2) Where you can do so, avail yourselves of lady teachers for our growing lads.

Those who have just taken to a Sunday stick and smoking are sometimes apt to air their independence in ways not too pleasant where their teacher is a man. But with a wisheaded and sympathising woman who is "apt to teach" they get wonderfully toned down, and show a chivalry of spirit for which few would give them credit.

(3) No meeting of the Night-school should take place without some religious teaching.

I deprecate the use of the Bible or Testament as a text-book just as I deprecate the use of those highly moral lesson-books which have no oases of stories to relieve their dull wastes, no proper names, nothing to cause a sparkle of the eye, or promote the occasional electric discharge of laughter which is so wholesome.

But whilst all care is given to make the instruction interesting, it is quite possible to go a little deeper. You can always close with a few words, packed and pointed, on some short passage of Scripture, or a text from your Parish almanack. You can follow this up by a prayer which shall bring their known needs before God. The older sort appreciate this, as it not only rounds off their work in a helpful manner, but serves to redeem it from the idea of a mere "going to school."

More than this—The Night-school often gives you an opportunity for a quiet talk with some of your men whom you cannot very well get at in their homes.

They will stay behind and give ready ear to your words. The subjects on which you have just been engaged will furnish "launchers" for useful talk, if they have no matters of their own to bring forward. At such times you get little confidences, which grow into larger ones as they wake up to the fact that you have a personal interest in them, and are ready to counsel and help as occasion may serve. Don't treat your Night-school as of small account.

(C) From the week-school I pass to the *Sunday-school*—that true nursery of the true Church.

You will not expect me to dilate upon its importance, though it is one of the strangest facts in all Church history that a sense of that importance was so long in dawning upon Christian men.

But you will always bear in mind two things, (1) that the Sunday-school is an invaluable instrument for enlisting the sympathies, calling out the powers, developing the usefulness, and so adding to the happiness of your Lay people. For here of necessity your Christian work must be more of the indirect than direct kind. You must act through others, and that action will be helpful to others besides the children.

Then (2) for another thing you will find your Sunday-school a great lever for the parents. Apart from the attracting influence which your interest in the young people excites, you can give many a home-thrust at home sins, or convey many an encouragement.

These are duly repeated when the Sunday work is gone over, as it very often is, in the evening. To put it very shortly, some of our best Home-missionaries are to be found in the ranks of our Sunday scholars.

Into many details of organisation and management I do not propose to go. To say nothing of the numberless text-books on this subject, you who are members of this University have ample opportunities for gaining practical experience of the system, and ought to go to your work with the latest and best methods which can be adopted.

But as it may so happen that your lot may be cast where your instruments, means, and appliances, will be far more scanty than those you have here, I may perhaps venture to offer a few suggestions.

(1) Be careful in choosing your teachers, however few they may be.

If an ideal Sunday-school is a place where souls are to be sought, then your choice should rest on those who know how to seek them, having a soul-story of their own. And if that choice can rest on no other than a sturdy farm-labourer, or miner, or fisherman, or girl in service, or boy brought up under your own eye, yet, if they only have some fibres of the root of the matter in them, and some capacity for taking pains, they will do more real good than a host of half-hearted, or no-hearted, young people who take up the work from very mixed motives indeed. Nor need you be

alarmed at their ignorance of a great many things other than their Bibles, if you will only, in the next place,

(2) Be careful to teach your teachers.

Light the torch, and let them hand it on. You need not be at a loss for matter with the Sunday-School Institute at hand to supply you with courses of instruction and suitable lessons, though it will be best if you can draw up your own lessons for their use.

There are few things more enjoyable than a Preparation Class where all are determined to contribute something, whilst you, as their leader, bring forth your stores, meet their difficulties, suggest illustrations, and finally teach the lesson to them, as it ought to be taught by them.

At such times you can stimulate their energies by showing them the true bearing of their work. You can insist upon its importance as heart-work. You can impress upon them the necessity for lively, though not noisy, teaching. You can warn them against that dangerous make-shift for proper instruction which is the bane of so many Sunday-schools, viz. the reading of story-books to eke out the time, if not take up the whole of it. And above all you can lay upon their hearts the primary duty of trying to know their children, by studying their characters, looking them up in their homes, showing a personal interest in

them. Knowledge so gained is the mother of useful teaching.

Your prayers and intercessions at such times will cement your hearts together, and give you a band of attached and loving helpers who will be your very right hands.

Then give them if you can the advantage of an occasional Training-lesson. Such things can be more easily had now than formerly. In some dioceses the Diocesan Sunday-School Society undertakes to provide efficient help of this kind. Short of this you might persuade some of your teachers to look in now and then at the Day-school, if an efficient one, and see how things are managed there. This may not be possible for all, especially those employed in labour during the day. But the suggestion may bear fruit even with these.

I remember the case of a young Sunday-school teacher in Cornwall, a kitchen-maid, who was determined to improve herself for the sake of her class. She got a week's leave from her mistress, and spent it at a school some way off which bore a good name for its teaching. She paid there for her board and lodging, marked the master's methods, and came back quietly to her work, with the comfortable feeling that she knew better how to use her tools. Others might do as she did.

(3) Perhaps, however, you may be so circum-

stanced, from lack of teachers or other causes, as to have the Sunday-school very much on your own hands. This need not daunt you even though you may have to undertake it in addition to two full services every Sunday.

For some years past I have had to do this myself. And I have done it on this wise. On strictly humanitarian principles I have no morning school. The children meet at 10·30 a.m. and sing and chant the coming Hymns and Canticles. Then, in the winter, we meet at 2 p.m. for the regular Sunday-school, where I have from 40 to 50 children to myself. In the summer, when I have Evening Service, I alter the time of meeting to 3 p.m. I invite the parents and others to attend if they like, and have also had, up till lately, a fringe of older boys who come for the lesson as hearers only, and who have books lent to them afterwards.

I use the black-board freely for writing down the heads of the lesson as it is being worked out by the children, or drawing rough maps and pictures. I talk on my fingers—a sure way of getting attention. I vary the teaching with hymns, and I endeavour to make the whole proceeding as cheerful as possible and as much out of the Day-school “rut” as it can possibly be. I need hardly add that I try to talk to the grown-up people through the children. It is, in short, a sort of undress Catechetical Lecture.

(4) As a matter of detail I am inclined to urge

the importance of Picture Teaching. It is practised on a large scale in America. I have known it successfully carried out in England. Good pictures for a year's course are supplied, one for each Sunday. The whole school takes this picture as the basis of a simultaneous lesson, properly graded of course for the different classes. A quarterly examination tests the progress of the children.

It depends upon the teacher or teachers how far this system shall be made edifying, not "baby-fying." But the principle is a right one. It was that which made the Crosses in our churchyards with their sculptured scenes of the Redemption the lesson-books for the unlearned in the times of old. It may well be worked now, where wits are dull and teachers few, for arresting and maintaining attention. "He who hath two eyes hath four ears."

(D) To come now to other plans for imparting Religious Instruction.

In some places in addition to the Sunday-school proper there is the Children's Service, or the stated Catechising in Church. Each of these has its uses. And that not merely as interesting the children but as enabling you to get more or less directly at older folk. Not a few will come to hear their children who will not easily be persuaded to come and hear you, or rather the message which you bring in your more formal ministrations.

The drawback to such services is the want of that individualising which the Sunday-school provides. The spoon does not fit all mouths, neither does the spoonful. Still they serve to vary your methods, and to make the children feel that they really are a part of your charge, and have a place in your loving regard. They will feel this all the more if in your general preaching you can give them a frequent children's corner, or make some direct appeal to them.

(E) A word as to the older boys. These are more or less of a care in every parish when looked at from the Sunday point of view. It is not easy to keep them always in hand.

Here the Town has an advantage over the Country. For by reason of the greater number of helpers, and the greater abundance of plant in the shape of class rooms and the like, the bigger boys can be passed on and up from grade to grade, until they come into the Confirmants' Class, and so emerge finally into the Bible Class. But in our Villages there are not the same facilities. And you have too often to let them go with the chilling, depressing, consciousness that their independence may only too soon fruit out into lawlessness, and give you no small sorrow of heart until you can gather up some of them at least for Confirmation.

Yet you must not regard them as entirely to be passed by, or as utterly inaccessible, however difficult it

may be to devise right plans for reaching them. If you are quite without helpers who could form them into a Sunday Bible Class (and your Squire's wife and daughters may not seldom be found willing to undertake this) there are other ways in which you can have some hold upon them.

I have for instance known it useful to let them have the run of the Rectory garden on Sunday afternoons, supplying them with interesting books and papers. Sometimes they can come to the Rectory directly after the afternoon service, and spend an hour there over books, Scripture prints, and—strange though it may sound—Scripture puzzles, with a closing hymn and a few hearty words of encouragement. Sometimes you can have them of an evening for a short Bible Class, followed by a friendly chat and some sacred music. It may not be much that you can do, but the effort to do it will be prized, and you may, by God's help, not only keep alive the spark of religious feeling which you have been permitted to kindle in past school-days, but fan it into a vigorous flame.

I have it strongly in my mind and on my conscience that we do not lay ourselves out sufficiently for this most important section of our flocks. If there were more love for these lads, who so often repel us by their roughness and rowdiness, there would be more ingenuity shown in trying to get and keep an influence over them. It can be done.

(F) I come now to that most important factor in your work of Religious Education—*the Confirmation Class.*

It is difficult to overrate its bearing on the social and spiritual life of your parishes as well as on the individual members of it.

Granted that the season of Confirmation has been, and is now, only too often neglected. Granted also that in only too many cases the pains laid out meet with but small return. Granted further that some of the most promising Confirmants fail after a time, and falter and turn back—for there are always more blossoms in spring than fruits in autumn,—yet, for all that, the results for good are neither few nor small.

And this has come about as, directly, from the distinct blessing of God, so, indirectly, from the wholesome change of opinion respecting the ordinance; from the greater care taken in preparing the candidates; from the less perfunctory performance of the rite on the part of our Bishops. For the Confirmation day is passing from holiday to holy-day. The presenting of our young people no longer depends on a mere verbal repetition of the Catechism. Our Reverend Fathers in God are more fatherly and less formal.

Make much of your Confirmation seasons. You will find in them opportunities for good which, with all that

there will be to tax your love, your energies, your patience, you cannot lightly afford to lose.

Be alive to your responsibilities and your encouragements. You have much in your favour—the age of your candidates, their power of receiving impressions, the interest of a new departure, a sense of sympathy, and not infrequently the desire for a right and Christ-like life.

In many cases too you will have had the advantage of carrying on their instruction up to Confirmation point in the school. And it will be well that all your school relations with them should have this season as a near point in view.

Moreover you will not have to meet them as new acquaintances and will have some experience of their characters and attainments.

Above all you have the promised power and Presence of God the Holy Ghost, and may go forward with good hope to your classes.

Touching their management I will only offer as before some practical hints.

More precise directions you will no doubt receive from your various Rectors and Vicars. I lay stress on the necessity for some Rectorial direction. A Confirmation Class is not the A.B.C. of the ministry. It is most unfair as well as most injudicious to leave any young clergyman at first to his own resources in this very difficult department of pastoral work.

Assuming however that you have this direction, you will find it useful to pay some attention to the following points.

(1) Be particular as to the age of your candidates.

I have been very glad to see lately that some of our Bishops have requested their Clergy to present none under fifteen years of age. Personally I am inclined to feel that sixteen would be more desirable.

There are indeed circumstances which might induce you to adopt the earliest possible period—such as the possibility of the child's leaving the parish shortly, or an ascertained apprehension of truth, or a desire which you feel to be genuine and well-grounded. But, as a rule, the very young candidates fail to realise their responsibilities, and lack intelligence though they may not lack a certain kind of impression at the time.

It is true that the vessel for the Master's use may be a vessel of small capacity; but some capacity there must be or else there is no fitness.

(2) Be particular as to personal interviews.

When notice of Confirmation is given, and attendance invited, make it a first point to see privately and separately each one who comes forward. Suit your time to theirs. Explain carefully the meaning, the object, the blessing of the rite. Let them see that it is not merely a passport to Holy Communion, but a season of solemn self-dedication to God's service, and a

means of obtaining strengthening grace for this in answer to personal prayer for the Spirit of God.

Ascertain their habits as to Bible-reading and prayer. Encourage them. Give them some plain, short, sensible book or paper to read. Pray pointedly for them.

You should see them again by themselves at the close of your classes, when you can touch their weak points, develope their strong ones, and leave the responsibility of coming forward very much with themselves. You will have done your part. It is for them to do theirs.

(3) Be particular in not overdoing your instruction or expecting too much.

Some good men pitch their standard so high and require so much to be learnt that the time of preparation becomes a burden to their young people. Give them, if you will, something to think about, something to learn during the week, or whatever other interval there may be, but do not demand too much.

I find it quite enough to give them three or four plain questions bearing on the subject last put before the class, to be answered in writing. Sometimes I add a text, a hymn, or short passage of Scripture to be learnt. From some of the duller or less educated sort you cannot even get this. In their case you will make exceptions, and be content with an honest response to

such plain, but searching, questions as you may think fit to put at your final private interview.

As regards the matter of your instructions I need say but little.

Our Church Catechism carefully and not drily handled will give you the basis required. It will enable you to frame most useful courses of lectures on the nature of the Baptismal Covenant, the grace required for its observance, the means by which that grace is to be procured. Do not spread your courses over too long a period. Bring out plain teaching on purity, honesty, truthfulness, holiness, usefulness.

On the point of Sacramental Instruction I shall only speak briefly in this place. If you expect your candidates to come to the Holy Communion shortly after their confirmation you must prepare them for it during your lecture course. A little interval may in most cases be desirable. This will enable you to enter upon the subject at greater length, and with greater fulness.

But whatever your system may be, let your instructions be as simple and clear as possible. You have very little idea of the vague and mistaken notions which they in common with many other people have on the subject. Press the command. Explain the requirements for a right and worthy partaking. Point out the specific blessing to be obtained. Beware of the error of excess on the one hand, of defect on the

other. Deal honestly with the Bible, with the Prayer-Book, with the Articles of our Church in their several teaching on this momentous subject.

Do not, on the one hand, turn the "memory" into the "mass." Do not, on the other, forget that the Holy Communion is a "means" as well as a "memory." And do not, whatever you do, make this "Holy mystery" more mysterious than the Lord Himself has made it.

Your Confirmants' first Communion should be made if possible by themselves and in the quiet of the morning. You can then have them with but little distraction save the novelty of the service. Explain that service in class before they come together. They will attend more readily, more devoutly, more intelligently.

Follow up this first Communion with as much intercourse as you can manage. There is often a rebound, or at least a slackening when tension is off. Careful attention is needed which is not always supplied. Interest them in each other. Give them some idea of that practical Christian Fellowship in which we of the Church of England are so terribly lacking. Find something for them to do in the way of practical Christian work, as Teachers, or Sunday readers to others. Pass them on to the Bible Class or Communicants' Class if you have one. Furnish them with a few simple rules for Christian living. Encourage mutual intercession. Have their names constantly on breast,

and hand, and shoulder before God. Love them. Look to them. Lift them on.

Thus “Shepherding,” thus “Teaching” you will have spiritual children not a few who will rise up and call you blessed.

Some may meet you here and say, as a girl once said to her clergyman when they accidentally met in a street in Paris:—“I have cause to thank God for your teaching: for you bore with me and put the truth before me over and over again until even my dull heart came to understand.” And some will doubtless meet you in that other City, whom you can present to the Chief Shepherd and say: “Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me.”

“Imbue. Initia. Instrue.”

“Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days.”

## LECTURE V.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN: HIS PAROCHIAL ORGANISATION.

THIS is the point which I take up to-day.

The *διδάσκειν* and the *ποιμαίνειν* must be accompanied by the *διακονεῖν*. The Teacher and the Pastor is also to be the minister—the Servant of Christ in the first place, the Servant, next, of his people for Christ's sake. To this ministry in its several departments you are, or will shortly be, called.

It comes before you in two aspects, the Spiritual and the Secular.

By the one I mean the looking to all those matters which tend more directly to the spiritual advancement of your people: by the other the caring for those which concern them more immediately in things of this present life. The two are not to be dissociated in idea, or in action, though for convenience' sake it may be better to treat of them on the present occasion apart.

Speaking broadly, the subject lies before us on these lines: (I.) ministering in the Congregation, (II.) ministering to the Congregation. What is to be your action in either case?

(I.) *As to ministering in the Congregation.*

It may perhaps be thought that this has been more or less handled in previous Lectures. But you may have remarked that hitherto I have said little or nothing on that part of your work which relates to the arrangement or conduct of the Services, and very especially to the ministration of the Sacraments.

The consideration of these points comes in very suitably in this place, and will serve I trust as a fitting preface to the mixture of details with which I shall have to deal later on.

Moreover they are matters which call as much for organisation as others of far less account. They pertain to that which is the substance and key-note of our service before God, the efficient ministry of His Word and Sacraments.

A. (1) The *arrangement of Services* apart from the method of conducting them requires some attention. You may indeed say that they are already arranged for you as to times and seasons, whilst there is no want of rubrical direction for their proper discharge. This is true up to a certain point. But there are some questions coming very much to the front which in these days of movement require some solution.

Daily Services; Division of Services; Hours of Service—what is to be said on these several points?

(1) Take the first of these; *Daily Services in Country Parishes*. How far are they advisable? I do not doubt their Canonicity in the abstract, nor their possibility, nor a certain increase of their observance in some Dioceses. But how far are they likely to be generally profitable and therefore desirable?

The two pleas most frequently urged in favour of them are these:—(1) the distinct benefit to the clergyman himself when the prayers are said after a spiritual and not after a perfunctory sort: (2) the distinct benefit to the people, who, though unable to be present, may feel themselves cheered and strengthened by the intercessions made at that time on their behalf.

So far undoubtedly there is profit; and where this actually results, reason would that the practice be adopted wherever other things admitted of it.

But in too many cases, the distance of the church from vicarage or village; the duty owed by the clergyman to his family as well as his parish in the matter of daily devotion; the danger of mere officialism, and consequent hardening repetition of forms; the necessity of husbanding time; these and other things like them are found to constitute a not unreasonable obstruction.

Personally I am not persuaded of the advisability of Daily Service, but I should be sorry to lay down any other rule but that laid down by S. Paul “*ἐκαστος ἐν*

*τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω,* “He who regardeth the service, let him regard it as to the Lord: and he who doth not regard it, to the Lord let him not regard it.”

Whether, however, your church is open for daily service or not, I see no objection to its being open at all hours for such parishioners and others as may like to resort thither for private prayer. There is not the same drawback as in towns, where theft and desecration are more to be feared.

(2) The *Division of Services* opens up an interesting inquiry.

Assuming that the present rule is good, and to hold good, that the whole of the Morning and Evening Prayers should be read during the Sunday, would it not be possible so to rearrange them that they might be less “longsome”?

This would point to more services and more “shortened services.” But abbreviation need not mean entire omission whilst elasticity would give interest. Yet neither abbreviation nor elasticity should be indulged in *ad libitum*. The consent of your congregation should be had. Nor will it be difficult to have it when the changes proposed are seen to be for their “godly edifying,” not the outcome of your caprice.

The objection usually urged against this multiplication (so called) of services is that, whilst such subdivision can be easily managed where there is a Curate, it would press rather hardly on a single-handed Vicar.

I can only say that I have not found it impossible. It is not beyond the ordinary powers of a Country Clergyman to take three sermons on a Sunday, and the third service affords the opportunity for the needed subdivision or shortening of the other two. At all events it can be done for part of the year, if the additional service is found to interfere with your attendance at the Sunday-school as a teacher yourself.

(3) Closely allied to this Division of Services is the *arrangement of Service Hours*.

Custom has so long ruled here that to hint at alterations seems rather heretical. But there is some force in the saying that "things satisfy as they suit." It is nowhere more forcible than in this detail.

Those who know the country and its habits are well aware that farm-work, and house-work, and sundry other shifts of work stand very much in the way of Church attendance. I have known this difficulty met by an 8 a.m. service for wives who had the Sunday dinner to look to; and by one at 4 p.m. or 4.30 p.m. to suit the convenience of milk-men and stock-men.

Generally speaking all your labourers are free for a service in the evening. You can then take the Litany or such prayers as you have omitted at previous services, a Lesson, some Psalms sung or said, with a large infusion of hymns and a sermon or address. It is a most enlivening as well as encouraging service.

The people like it and are ready to attend; whilst the brevity and liveliness operate as a check to sleep and other less pleasant ways of “getting through Church.”

I am aware that an outcry has been made against evening services in the country as leading to evil doings amongst our young people. I believe the charge to be greatly exaggerated. And this must be borne in mind that, service or no service, they will not keep at home. They may as well have the opportunity of going where the dreaded evils will meet with discouragement and remedy.

(4) The proper ordering of your services will not be complete unless you pay *some attention to the musical parts thereof.*

Here quantity as well as quality must be looked to. As a rule our country people, though they are moving with the times, do not care for a service fully choral. Least of all do they care for it when the singing is confined to the clergyman and his choir. They like to take a part and prefer that which is congregational.

Form your choir then, and train it with a view to their leading the singing. Have some regard to their characters. Insist on regular and punctual attendance at all practices. Inculcate and exemplify all possible reverence. Better have no music at all than sacred music profanely rendered.

It will increase the interest in matters musical

if you invite any of your people who may like to do so to stay after service to a hymn-practice. A goodly number will generally be found to remain. It tends greatly to the heartiness of the singing, as well as to its intelligent performance.

Before I leave the subject of the services I should like to say a word on some matters connected with the conduct of the regular and Occasional Offices.

(1) It will often help your people if you make a few expository remarks after any Lesson which may seem to require them, and there are not a few of this character.

(2) The Marriage Service may very appropriately be closed by a short and homely address, either substituted for or added to the portions of Scripture now generally read. I have known this to be greatly valued.

(3) In the same way the Burial Service will give you an opportunity for some plain and loving words at the grave-side. You can then reach hearts and consciences which are more or less awake at such times and disposed to receive impressions. Even if you can do nothing more by this than testify your sympathy that is something done.

B. The *ministering of the Sacraments* is the next point which demands attention.

All controversy apart, they are, as our Church distinctly teaches, certain means of grace where rightly

and worthily partaken of. They are therefore to be clearly set before our people and affectionately urged upon them. It is regrettable beyond regret that those Holy Ordinances which should be more than signs of unity and communion should have become occasions of strife and disunion.

Into their doctrinal bearings it is not my intention to enter. I can only beg you again, both in mastering them for yourselves and expressing them to others, to adhere closely and loyally to the Bible and the Formularies of the Church of England, to accept their statements with all honesty, and to carry them out with all fidelity, avoiding the fourfold danger of Traditionalism, Materialism, Sacerdotalism, and Formalism.

(1) With regard to *the Sacrament of Baptism* you may find some difficulties raised on the part of parents which are not always of a doctrinal character.

If not utterly indifferent they may plead that they do not like to stand out before the Congregation, or that they cannot get Sponsors, or that they have no dress good enough for the child, or that they have to pay a fee which they can ill afford.

But these and other trifling objections are easily removed. You can have a monthly Baptismal Sunday afternoon with a Children's Service. Sponsors can be provided from your Church workers. A christening robe and frock makes a very grateful loan. Fees are illegal. If you can only get parents to give due notice

of the Baptism, these and other like points can be quietly talked over. You can also give some explanation of the rite, and help them to look upon it as something more than a meaningless form.

(2) *The Administration of the Holy Communion* calls for a few remarks.

First as to its frequency. We are rapidly getting past the day of quarterly Communions, or the "three times a year at least." In many country parishes weekly celebrations are the rule. I am disposed to think that there should never be more than the monthly interval in any parish.

The hours chosen should be such as to suit the majority of your Communicants. Early Communions are not an impossibility. Labourers and their wives will turn out in the Country as well as in the Town, and it may be well to vary your custom, say by an early Administration every six weeks. I will not discuss the moot question of Evening Communions, I will only say that I adopted the practice before the present opposition was raised, and am prepared to defend it on Scriptural and Ecclesiastical grounds.

If the Administration takes place after the morning service, a short 'meditation' or address bearing on the practical side of the Communicant's life is a desirable substitute for the ordinary sermon. It can also be made the vehicle of direct Sacramental teaching and

will enable you to put the subject, and the duty of communicating, before those who partly from indifference, partly through want of understanding, habitually fail to present themselves.

In the case of some adults who are perfectly qualified to be partakers, it may be necessary sometimes to overcome their diffidence, a diffidence which arises from ignorance, by rehearsing the service and the "manual acts" in private. I have known scruples and hesitations overcome in this way. Certain people would not come because they were afraid of making some mistake and so exposing themselves to ridicule. When they saw the simplicity and reasonableness of each act, and understood the part they had to take, all objections vanished, and their attendance has been most regular and devout.

Let nothing, in short, be wanting on your part to the due Administration of either Sacrament, and they will be set by your people in their right place, and observed with all right observance.

II. I turn now to your *ministering "to" your congregation.*

In so doing I take up those various forms of practical machinery and action which have not been already set forth in connexion with Preaching, Visiting, and Education.

You will be struck at first, if not somewhat dismayed, by the multiplicity of calls made upon you, as

well as by their infinite variety. You have to be many men in one.

A. One of your first cares therefore will be to multiply yourselves so that you may be delivered from what has been quaintly called "the sin of doing anything yourselves which could have been done for you by others." This can only be effected by seeking out and organising a body of Church-workers who will loyally cooperate with you and carry out your plans. It is your duty, as well as for your comfort and usefulness, to do this. You owe it to your Lay-people to give them their proper place as members of Christ's Body, and therefore as His ministers in their several places. You owe it also to them to give them an opportunity of carrying out the great law of Christian Unity, of consecrating and developing their powers, of securing for themselves the crown which shall not be "starless."

They may want some looking-up. But be your parish never so small there will always be some who can give you a helping hand, if you wisely measure their powers, fit their work to those powers, and choose suitable times for their working.

Your Communicants will naturally be the source to which you will turn in the first instance, though you can utilise some of your non-communicants as well. And you need not despair even if you are compelled to use the services of your labouring men and women, pro-

vided that you take the most consistently Christian folk. There are not a few rural parishes where workers of this kind have proved most efficient.

Having secured these workers you can go forward with more ease and energy as you assign to them their various sections of work, as District Visitors, Sunday-school Teachers, Book and Tract Distributors, Collectors, Managers of Meetings, and the like.

I need not enter into any details of the work to be undertaken by these various helpers.

May I, however, say a word or two in reference to your District Visitors?

Do not have them too young. Carefully impress upon them these two things:—

(1) That they are not only your representatives, your eyes, and your hands,—your eyes to see what may be wanting in the homes you visit, your hands to bestow all needed temporal relief,—but that they are also the representatives of the Lord Jesus, that they are dignified by His calling, accepted for His service, responsible to His tribunal, to be strengthened by His Spirit.

(2) Impress upon them that they should time their visits wisely, treat their people with unvarying courtesy, never repeat in this cottage the tales, true or otherwise, which they have heard in that, never indulge in culinary curiosity and peep in the pot.

With regard to your helpers who may be drawn

from the Working-class ranks and who have no time for District Visiting properly so-called, you can employ these, as indeed you can employ others, in the particular line of Fellowship-workers. Let me explain what I mean.

I have already alluded to the fact that in our Church of England too little heed is given to the idea of Christian Fellowship. We are Aggregations rather than Congregations—separate particles rather than coherent members, and somewhat selfish in that separation. As a consequence we lose many from our Communion who would fain belong to us, and who would belong to us if we looked them up when they began to think, and helped them onward in their Christian infancy. The Nonconformist bodies understand this better than we do. They no sooner see a person beginning to make for the haven than they tell off some one who shall join himself to him, take him in tow, and pilot him into membership.

Now this is exactly what our stedfast working people might do for their fellows. Whilst you as ordained teachers will not abnegate your position, and whilst you will always be welcome as helpers to these anxious ones, you will still find your Fellowship-workers of signal use. They can be more constantly “at” these awakened neighbours or fellow workmen. They can shew a sympathy of feeling and idea. They can speak more to the understanding. They can help

through difficulties into which others not of their class can rarely enter. And this will have a reflex action. They will be all the better and stronger for it themselves. Watering others they too shall be watered.

Nor is this the only way in which they can help. Though the Canon touching Sponsorship has been wisely altered so as to allow of parents standing for their children, yet there are not a few who wish to avail themselves of the services of others as Sponsors, but do not know to whom they can turn. In such cases you may reasonably look to your Communicant Church-workers and lay the office before them as both a duty and a privilege. They will not be slow to fall in with a proposal which promises so fair an opportunity of usefulness.

I will only add that the treatment of your Church-workers should be marked by genuine cordiality, consideration, and readiness to counsel and cheer. Be perfectly open with them with respect to your plans. Avoid all partiality. They are but human, and jealousies appertain to humanity. Aim at punctuality and carefulness in all despatch of business. Above all knit them to yourselves, to their work, to their great Master and yours by constant prayer. Get them to make it a point of conscience to pray one for another. Mutuality of intercession is the soul and strength of all Church membership.

B. From Church-workers I pass to *Church work in some of its many developments*. It lies before us with demands general and special, spiritual and secular.

Let me begin with some of those which are of a *more generally spiritual character*.

(α) And first concerning the *Cottage Lecture* so called, whether held in cottage, or mission-room, or barn, or farmer's kitchen. You will find it one of your most valuable institutions.

It is good for yourselves, because it will enable you to take greater breadths of Scripture than a sermon usually demands, to obtain greater readiness of speech and greater simplicity of style, to find *extempore* delivery more easy, to adapt yourselves more thoroughly to the life that goes on about you.

It is good for your Lay Helpers who can occasionally relieve you if they do not take one entirely on their hands.

It is good for your people, as you can generally get together those who go to no place of worship either through stress of work, or unwillingness, or apathy. You can speak to them eye to eye and with an elasticity and freedom which they value not a little.

It is good for you congregationally, inasmuch as out of these smaller gatherings you get recruits for your Sunday services. The Lecture feeds the church.

You will hear occasionally from some regular ab-

sentee, "I am coming to see you next Sunday, Sir!" which is the formula for going to church.

Personally I have reason to speak with some thankfulness of such Lectures given, not on a week-day, but on alternate Sunday evenings at different centres in rotation.

Ordinarily they can be held on the week-day afternoon for the women, or for the old people by themselves. A suitable hour in the evening will catch the men. You should not run over the hour, and the more singing you give them the better they will like it.

(β) Next to the Cottage Lecture comes *the Bible Class*. This I am glad to say has become a much more common institution in the Country parish than of yore.

The time is the great difficulty. If you hold it yourselves you may find it hard to get time for it on the Sunday, though this seems the most suitable day for the men. A week night does very well in the winter. You have however to drop your class in the summer months, which is not satisfactory. If you should have no third service of any kind, then one of the hours between 4—6 or 7—8 on Sunday is as good a time as any. I have heard of Bible Classes before Morning Service, and directly after Service in the afternoon.

With a lay-helper, male or female, you can make any arrangement you please.

If the men are shy about coming, a printed invitation sent round echoing the invitation given from the pulpit and from house to house will generally fetch them in. But there will be little need for this after the first start, and when once you have begun to draft your older lads and young Communicants into the class. In admitting these, however, you will take care not to let their number be so great as to swamp the older element. You may gain more life of a certain kind, but it may be at the expense of comfort to some. And comfort, which means ease in attending, and in speaking, is a factor to be considered.

In conducting your class you must not look for much help from your member, at all events not at first. But you will always make the effort to draw them out. One great help toward this is to give out one or two subjects, such as the meaning of certain texts, or some doctrine, or point of history, which will occur in the next lesson. This they can think over during the week, and can question you about, when you meet. Some clergymen have found it useful to get their members to send in written questions which have led to helpful discussion.

The great thing is to prevent the class from becoming a mere Lecture. To avoid this, welcome any remark however irrelevant, any question however out of the way, any dogmatic assertion however much beside the mark. It will be for you to clear away the cobwebs,

to get *the* meaning out of *their* meaning, and to turn what may be desultory and unprofitable into real and substantial teaching.

You have the best and fittest opportunity for combating any lurking error either in themselves, or in the parish round them, and so can help them to be helpers of others.

(γ) What the Bible Class is to the men that the *Mothers' Meeting* can be made to their wives. It is no doubt comparatively a recent formation. But it has been found of signal use.

You will generally find some lady who can take it, and the details will best be left to her. An occasional visit from you is desirable, as you can then give some direct spiritual instruction, and close the meeting with Hymn and Prayer. In any case this point of spiritual instruction should not be overlooked by your Lady-superintendent. It is a mistake to suppose that the women care only for the stories which form the staple of the reading to them. In most cases they prefer the Bible, and not seldom give evidence that the reading has not been in vain. A wise-hearted lady can always make it pointed without being personal.

(δ) The *Prayer Meeting* and the *Communicants' Meeting* are kindred agencies to the Bible Class, though they may include greater numbers.

The first, to be of any real use, should be held weekly. Times vary. Some clergymen have them on

the Friday or Saturday evenings with the express view of seeking a blessing on the Sunday Services. Some have them early on the Sunday morning, though this custom is more general in the towns.

Methods again vary. Sometimes it is found best to let the people pray amongst themselves for half the time of the meeting. Then the clergyman comes in to take the closing half into his own hands. Sometimes two or three persons are asked to lead in prayer, the clergyman closing as before.

At all such meetings some portion of Scripture should be read and commented on. A series of subjects previously appointed will suggest both thought and prayer. Subjects for intercession should be frequently requested, and placed in some convenient receptacle, such as a box at the door. They give variety, reality, and life to the meeting.

(ε) Your *Communicants' Meeting* will be conducted much in the same way, if you choose to have one separate from the Prayer Meeting and bearing stately on Communicant life and practice.

They supply a great want. For if there is one thing which your people as professing Christians require it is this—definite instruction in the Christianity they profess. The details of holy living, its practical bearing on every-day duty, the loud call which exists for it, the blessed results which flow from it—these are all points on which they need to be enlightened. For apathy is

often succeeded by haziness even in the most honest souls. They will be none the worse for a little clear and compendious theology. And if you have, as you will have, to strike at abuses or inconsistencies remember always to strike home, whilst you strike lovingly. Be earnest: be bold: be plain: be true: *but* be tender also. Your Communicants will then be your present joy, as they will, I trust, be your coming crown.

(ζ) The formation or carrying on of *Associations for Foreign or Home Missions* will be another of your first cares.

No parish, however small, should be without the former. Independently of its being the primary duty of the Church of Christ to obey the one parting command of her Lord and Head, every such association is a valuable parochial agency. It brings with it much reflex benefit. For interest in Foreign Missions is no inoperative thing. It stimulates, encourages, directs Christian life by calling attention to the example of converts from heathenism. It calls forth sympathy, it enlarges hearts, promotes liberality, fosters zeal, strengthens self-denial, gives subjects for prayer, develops the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

It will be a good day for the Church of England when she becomes, in the fullest sense of the word, a Missionary Church. She will enlarge her own borders and establish her rightful influence in exact proportion to her reaching out to the regions beyond.

I offer, as before, one or two hints in connexion with your Sermons and Meetings.

(1) *Try and dispense as far as possible with outside help from head-quarters.*

No doubt your people may wish for the voice of the man from the Mission Field. But such men are not always to be had. The Deputational Staff of our great Societies is sadly overworked, and the men who come home for rest ought to have it. No! Preach your own Missionary Sermons or get local help for them. The personal interest which your own preaching will evince will carry no small weight with your parishioners. As you get stirred yourselves you will stir them.

(2) Then as to your meetings. The reproach of dulness is only too frequently deserved. It arises from two causes, (1) want of judicious selection in the matter of speakers, (2) want of preparation on the part of the speakers selected. The time is surely past for paying every clergyman who comes the empty, very empty, compliment of asking him to "say a few words."

Look out beforehand the men who have something to say and can say it. Never mind passing over those who are likely to befog your audience, though you may give some little offence in so doing. God's cause should not suffer through man's incompetence.

Then when your men, lay or clerical, are chosen, choose their subjects for them, if they will not choose them for themselves. Let your speaking be according

to the Apostolic rule, "by two or three at the most." You will secure attention, and dulness will disappear.

Take a little care in these respects. Have quarterly or monthly meetings for information without collections, at which some of your clerical neighbours can give addresses on various Mission stations. Circulate Missionary-boxes, and give attention to your Box-holders. Get your people to take in Missionary periodicals. Form if possible Juvenile Associations. You will be surprised to find what genuine interest is taken when genuine interest is shewn by you, and what abundant liberality can be found even in the very poorest locality.

C. From these and other spiritual agencies of a like kind I turn to those of a *more special character*.

It is felt by every Country Pastor, that apathy and indifference are two evil spirits which largely require to be exorcised. For a time they may seem to depart, but as ordinary means of barring out begin to be familiar there is more than a possibility of return. The old machinery, however well in gear, is apt to lose some of its force. A new departure may seem to be advisable.

You will therefore give some heed to those movements which have lately been developed and found highly instrumental for good. Chief amongst these is the *Parochial Mission*. The usual form of this is doubtless well known to most of you, with its prayerful preparation, house-to-house calls, invited Mission

Preacher, stirring and winning addresses, soberly conducted after-meetings, and diligent following up.

A word or two of caution may not be out of place.

*Do not rush into a mission.* Of all things in your world parochial it demands most thoughtful preparation. Two months are not too much to give to preliminaries. These will comprise, as the first of first things, the selection of a fit missioner, and there is now a large body of well-qualified men from whom you can make selection. Next will come the instruction of your workers, the repeated and importunate invitation of your people, and above all the prayer, special, personal, united, without which little blessing can ensue. You must wait for the "promise of the Father" if you would have a Pentecostal ingathering of souls.

When the mission is over *look well to those who have been moved by it.* It may be that you have not many who are newly changed. This is not always the direct result of a Mission. But you will most probably see not a little fruit of your former labours in the establishment and growth of your more thoughtful people, as well as in the decision of others who have received blessing through your Missioner. These will be a gain to you in every way. For through them, thus confirmed in the faith, God's work will go forward in their action upon others. Seek them out. Set them upon some definite work. Strengthen their hands by

constant, loving counsel. You will reap no small benefit through their fresh and hearty service.

If, however, you do not see your way to such a Mission as this, you can welcome an occasional visit from your Diocesan Missioner or Mission Preacher, if there be such in your Diocese. Failing this, seek to some Father or Brother in the ministry who is known as a preacher or worker. Let him not only go through your parish work with you and point out what may need improvement, or alteration, or vitality, but let him meet your people both in their homes and in the Church. The change of voice, of delivery, it may be also of subject, will freshen them up, and impart a greater liveliness to their after listening to you.

But the Parochial Mission and Missioner's visits as now suggested may not meet with favour everywhere. Some may think them too short, some too spasmodic, some too exciting, some too inquisitorial. They are for something more sustained, and more after their usual methods whilst not altogether wanting in novelty.

Perhaps *the Church Army* would meet the needs of such. It has the merit of working in loyal sympathy with the Church of England, provides very efficient teachers, reaches many who would otherwise be un-reached, increases the number of confirmants and communicants.

It is moreover, removable at will, whilst its officers, if found unsuitable to the locality, can be changed

at the request of the Vicar in whose parish they work.

Where one parish is too small to be worked alone, or where the expense is too great, it has been found practicable to work a group of parishes from one central point.

A further special agency of a more or less spiritual sort has been found in the *guilds, unions* and *societies* which are now in process of development.

The law of association is a Scriptural as well as natural law. To it the Church of Christ owes both its being and well-being. The family idea runs through its whole constitution, and is based in effect on that great principle for life on earth, "Two are better than one." We do but follow out this law when we aim at the formation of certain concentric circles which have the Lord Jesus Christ, His Church, His cause and kingdom as their common centre.

To some indeed it seems enough that there shall be but one great Association, the Church itself. And certainly it would suffice if all the members thereof were more keenly alive to the duties implied by that sacred Fellowship. As it is, subsidiary bodies are thought essential. Bands of different ages, classes, and powers in the community are embodied to carry out different aims connected with the Master's service, and very notably amongst the young. Time would certainly fail to enumerate even a tithe

of the guilds which have been set on foot. It would be an invidious task to draw comparisons as to their several efficiency.

Most parishes would find such a body, whether it be a Communicants' Union, a branch of the Young Men's or Girls' Friendly Society, or Young Women's Christian Association, a most useful helper as long as practical Christian sympathy and support are made the main elements. Unhappily such associations are not always as good as their creeds, and no small harm is done by the admission of unqualified members, and the ignorant fussy zeal of would-be managers. You will find it a safe rule to have any society of the kind more or less under your own control, and to make it clear that your aim in establishing it is of a spiritual sort.

So far then would I deal with the *spiritual* framework of your parishes, and the various institutions which may be useful in building it up and keeping it together.

D. You will not omit attention to the *secular*.

For convenience' sake I would arrange these as they severally bear on the "*minds, bodies and estates*" of your people.

It can be little more than a bare enumeration. But details will be less necessary, as a book of some 400 pages has lately been published called "The Parish Guide," which gives them for the most part with sufficient clearness.

I will only indicate some of the most essential.

For the *mind* you will provide, (1) a good *Village Library*, and see to three things in connexion with it: (a) regularity of issue, (b) tidiness in use, (c) replenishment of shelves. If your schoolmaster or mistress have no time to attend to it, depute one of your lay-helpers or an ex-Sunday scholar for the work. (2) Establish if you can a convenient *Reading or Club-room*. If you cannot build, an old cottage or farm kitchen will serve the turn. Don't make it too ornamental. Provide good fire, good light, and convenience for smoking. Furnish it with games, specially bagatelle. Supply illustrated and other—especially local—papers. And if you are affiliated to the “Village Club Association” get a yearly consignment of readable books. Have as few rules as possible. Put the management and order-keeping in the hands of the members. If possible have separate rooms for boys and men, for readers and for players. And don't admit any under fifteen. If it serves no other purpose your Reading-room will tend to keep the street quiet, and the “public” empty for most nights in the week.

(3) On the subject of *Entertainments* I will only say—Don't be overridden by them. If you have music let it be of the best. Keep down the comic element. If you lecture, make large use of diagrams and magic lantern. Give talks on common things. Turn your own *πάρεργα*, your by-studies—astronomy,

botany, natural history, to account. If you are asked to further the present mania for theatricals say "No," and say it unmistakeably. Momus and Terpsichore are not the best parochial props.

When you come to care for the *material good of the body*, give thought to its thriving, its development, its pleasure, its health.

The first will be met by your Temperance Society and Band of Hope; by your Coffee or Cocoa-room and Soup-kitchen; by your Clothing, Shoe, and other like clubs. Sobriety and thrift are the leading wants in our Rural Parishes, and your labour in promoting them will be well repaid.

Athletics in a moderate form will help to right development. A Recreation Ground is not an unheard-of thing now-a-days, and with a little trouble is procurable in most parishes. Through the kindness of my Squire I have just been able to open one. Cricket, Quoits, Bowls, Rounders and the like all tend to bodily good.

But you must be careful to have the threads of management a little in your hands, and to give some personal supervision from time to time. A limited Monarchy is the best form of Republic. Let your people do the chief part of the necessary arrangements, but do it under you.

The School Treat, the Harvest Home, the Choir-supper, the Parochial or Communicants' Tea will minister to the pleasure of the body after a genial and

hopeful sort. They are a cheap but effective cement. There is much glue in a cup of tea. Feasting together fosters fellowship.

For health you will establish or maintain your medical clubs for adults and young people. No one who is of age to belong to such a club should fail to do so. They are now brought within the reach of the very young.

In some places Trained Parish Nurses have been tried. My own experience leads me to say that such Nurses are better in single Parishes of sufficient area than in a District or group of Parishes. In the latter case much time is lost in going to and fro.

The services of such women are always most gratefully appreciated. Many a home is kept together, and much burden of care lifted by the help thus given to the family.

The matter of *estate* comes next. Here you will do well to go cautiously. Not so much perhaps in the line of Benefit and Provident Clubs and Penny Banks—these should be urged without fail—but as touching the land.

I need not say that the allotment question has come very much to the front in the country. Not that the land-hunger is as great as some choose to believe. Land is wished for all over England, but not in large portions.

Your advice or your assistance may be asked for

in some cases. When this happens care should be taken in two directions. (1) Do all you can to show thorough sympathy with your labourers, and to help them to a share. (2) Next see that the said share is not unmanageably large. In such cases more capital or more labour, which means more earning-time laid out, will be required. This should be plainly shown.

In my own parish I have lately been able to secure allotments for young unmarried men between 15—25, a plan which gives them some little interest in the soil. Cooperative Farming by labourers has not hitherto been so much of a success as to call for its adoption everywhere.

Such then are the leading secular helps for mind, body and estate which I have to suggest. All have been tried and found both workable and successful.

In trying them for yourselves I would ask you to give good heed to the following:—

Remember that no two parishes are alike. The institutions which are a decided success in one, are often dead failures in another.

Always take your people as much as you can into your confidence when anything new has to be proposed.

Treat them as a family.

Be exceedingly open as to all that relates to Parish money-matters.

Let them have a Parish Almanack or a Parish Magazine with details of parochial interest.

On the last night of the year have a closing service in the church, and give them a summary of the National and Parochial History for the year, marking all that may call for reproof, for encouragement, for prayer.

Bear in mind that all your organisation is but a means to an end, and that end the eternal welfare of your people. Do not expect too much from it, however perfect it may be, or however smoothly it may work for a time.

Lastly, have it always before you that there is something more essential than the best machinery, and that is, the moving force. In your case that moving force is the man—yourself—but only, and always, *that man as moved by God.*

## LECTURE VI.

### THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN: HIS INFLUENCE.

IN this, my closing Lecture, I come back from the work to the workers. I have taken you round your field, and have tried to shew you what has to be done in the different departments of your labour, preaching, visiting, educating, organising. I have now to deal with that which alone under God can make these things instinct with life and power—your personal character and influence—in a word, your life.

The “*qualiter vivat*,” is, in the case of every clergyman, whether in Town or Country, the proper complement and evidence of the “*qualis sit*” and the “*qualiter doceat*.” In speaking on this subject I would fain speak as a brother to brothers, not as standing above you to teach, but as standing by your side to learn.

It may serve to concentrate our thoughts on this subject and give them a thoroughly Scriptural direction, if I base the remarks I have to offer on a well-known passage in Hosea xiv. 5, 7. It runs thus:—“I will be as

the dew unto Israel ; he shall grow or blossom as the lily ; and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree. They that dwell under his shadow shall return : they shall revive as the corn, and grow, or blossom, as the vine."

These words have suggested to me, and I trust may suggest to you some ideas as to *Ministerial Influence*, its elements, its working, its development.

Before, however, I come to speak of the elements of influence I would ask you to realise that each one of you possesses and exercises an influence—a "shadow" either for good or evil. You have the power of making or marring to a very serious extent. There is no such thing as living to yourselves, however much you may think to live for yourselves: that very self-fulness leaves its mark somewhere.

It is true that some profess to be under the impression that if they do no good, at all events they do no harm. But is it so possible to live a really idle, untelling life ? Nay ! Is it not true that the smallest atom casts a shadow, and is either a helpful shelter or a blighting shade to something else ? Is it not a fundamental law of our being that "we touch and attract, or harden and repel" in a way which we cannot always anticipate. Directly or indirectly there is a flowing-in, an "influxus or influentia of our lives into the lives of others, to their loss or gain."

As a first step then you should be brought, or bring yourselves, to feel that this power is an actual and living force which belongs to you severally. As a further step you will have it for your care that this stream of inflowing shall not be as the waters of the Dead Sea, but rather as the waters of that river of God by the side of which all was life, and fertility, and beauty.

I. But how is this to be? What are the rills that go to make the stream? What are the things which go to make up the "shadow?" It is a very composite thing. I can but indicate some of the leading elements in its composition.

(1) The first that I would instance is the possession of a *true godliness, a personal holiness—the Purity of the Lily.*

It is that reaching after, and raying out of the Divine likeness which is at once our simplest duty, and our strictest debt. It is that "imitatio Christi," which is as attractive as it is arousing.

For in spite of the objections raised by some people to what is called serious godliness, or in other words a living reflection of the living Christ, there is yet a secret drawing of heart towards those who possess it. It commands respect. It creates confidence. It conciliates regard. That which is not liked at first, nay is actively resented as a more than tacit reproof, becomes, as time goes on, an irresistible power.

Many a time has it been said in effect, "It was not what you preached, which so told on me, but what you were." The Christian weakling whose character and conduct are a perpetual reminder of things above, whose spirit and tone and temper are of heaven, heavenly, sways more hearts than an intellectually stronger or parochially more active, but less Christ-like man.

*Be holy, if you would be helpful.* But let me remind you that your personal holiness must be a thing of growth and increase. You must grow as the lily. It is to be progressive, if it cannot be perfect. Very rightly has it been called "the path of the spiritual life." As such it calls for advance.

It is not enough that there shall have been the communication of life through the Spirit, no, nor yet the separation from the world which such life demands, no, nor yet the heart-whole consecration to God's service, no, nor yet the willing coöperation with Him in conformity to His will and the carrying out of His purpose—if these things are only and always beginnings. It is good that there be these, but there must be development. The child must grow into the young man, the young man into the father. The light which may stream into the porch of the heart and flood it with brightness, must also penetrate its innermost chambers and make it and the life which comes of it all "light in the Lord."

Set before yourselves the possibilities of holiness. Believe that the Christ-life can be lived here, in its measure, after a very Christ-like sort. As He, the express Image of the Father, set Him forth and “expounded” Him to men in such sort that they who saw Him saw the Father, so may you, by His shining into your hearts, not only receive the knowledge of that likeness, but set it forth feature by feature as representatives of Jesus. Apart from miracles wrought by you there may yet be manifestation.

His tenderness and truth, His patience and meekness, His guilelessness and purity, His love and lifting up, may all be there. Your life towards God may be as real as His, your life towards man as true.

Surely you have known those who had so much of the mind of Christ that as you marked their *ἀναστροφή*, the spirit which they shewed, the bent of thought which was so transparently clear in them, the steadfast spirituality of their walk, you were fain to think that you were looking—I say it with all reverence—upon the very Christ.

Shall not the possible with some become the actual with all?

Shall not this law of progress in Holiness become the very law of your lives? Will you not strive to perfect it in the fear of God? “Follow after it” (*διώκετε*) with hound-like eagerness. “He that has

holiness enough never had any." The least saint has grace enough to be thankful, the greatest not enough to be idle. Seek it humbly: seek it earnestly: seek it continuously. Let it be seen in the conduct of your home, in the choice of your friends, your society, in the regulation of your pursuits, in your unworldly discharge of needful world-work, in your diligent, unsparing devotion to all known duty, as well as in the combating of your weaknesses and the conflict with your sins. Do not for a moment suppose that it will make you less of a man because less like the men about you. The grace of Holiness does not deprive you of your natural bent or faculties: it only rectifies them. It tempers and moderates affections, and does not abolish them. It purifies and re-points desires, but does not remove them. S. Peter the Apostle was the same as to energy as Peter the fisherman. S. Paul the Apostle the same as to forcefulness of character as Saul the persecutor. Only the energy of the one and forcefulness of the other received a new direction under the hand of the sanctifying Spirit.

Make then this Personal Holiness, this leading element of influence, your special aim. Want this and you want all. Nothing can make up for its absence. With it you become a power. When men come to say of you, "Lo! this is a holy man of God who passeth by us continually," they will look to you and lean upon you. *Sanctity is strength.*

(2) Closely allied to this feature of Personal Holiness is the comely virtue of *Consistency*, "the white flower of a blameless life," the true lily-growth, a potent element of Influence.

You must be all of a piece. The life should agree with the lip, the practice with the profession. "*Semper idem*" is the right minister's motto. And men mark whether you live up to it or not. They judge you by the eye quite as much as by the ear. They study you in the piece more than in the lump. They have a shrewd idea as to what you ought to be, and how you ought to act in certain circumstances, even when you yourselves may not be quite clear about it.

Your life, therefore, if it is to be *telling* must be *true*. The household and the street should bear the same witness as the sick chamber or the mission-room, the platform or the pulpit.

Consistency of ideal, of aim, of action ; thorough transparency of heart ; unwavering cultivation of the harmonies and sincerities of a faultless walk in matters of recreation as well as matters of work—these are the things to be borne in mind.

The following description of a consistent man, though quaint, may be helpful. The writer says: "The actings of a sanctified person are conformable to the principle of spiritual life, which is a permanent, abiding principle: not sometimes in us, and at other times quite gone from us, but at all times remaining in us. Such a

consistent person is holy in a continued course, he walks with God, he applies himself to keep the commandments continually....He is not holy by fits and pangs...good in thunder and lightning, or in a storm at sea. Not at first seething-hot in his profession, after a while lukewarm, at length key-cold, standing with Peter at the fire, but shortly after flying and denying.... His goodness is not like ‘the morning cloud and early dew’.... His religion is not operative in company, silent in secret: he is not like water that conforms itself to the shape of everything into which it is poured, or like a picture which turns every way. His religion leaves him not at the church-door : he retains his purity wherever he lives. He has a principle like a fountain in him which supplies him in time of drought, not like a splash of water licked up with an hour’s heat of the sun: the music allures him not, the furnace affrights him not from God.”

That is holy consistency. Do not come short in it. In the field of art a torso may be a treasure, or a piece of cracked china a priceless possession. But in the field of influence men are content with nothing short of complete proportion, and a soundness without flaw.

At no time can you say that you are “off duty.” At no time can you throw aside the man of God and say with one of old, “Lie there, Lord Chancellor”—“lie there, Christ’s servant!”

As ever you would be happy, as ever you would be

useful in your ministry—be consistent. Intermittent uprightness is as bad a disease as intermittent fever. It weakens you: it cripples those who come in contact with you. You cannot be too careful. One unguarded expression, one indiscreet action, one little deviation from the path of Christian sobriety, or circumspection, and you may undo in a moment the work of a lifetime. Never let it be said of you as it has been said of some, “When he was in the pulpit we wished he never was out of it, and when he was out of it, we wished he never was in it.”

“But, good my brother,  
Do not as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
Whilst like a puff and careless libertine  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own rede.”

Be thorough. Drop all veneer. Look well to your character. Be very careful as to its merits, and you cannot fail to mould the characters of others on whom you have to act. *Sincere consistency is strength.*

(3) A third great element of influence is to be found in a *holy and tempered boldness.*

You are to “cast forth (or strike) your roots as Lebanon.” There must be stability, and solidity, and strength about you. Men will not lean on reeds.

But in what is this boldness to be shewn?

(a) *In confession*—unshrinking, persistent, confession of Christ and His Faith.

It is not enough that you take the work of the Lord Jesus as the ground of your hope; His word for your guide, His example for your pattern, His glory for your great object in life. You must go further. You must own all this before men, and press it home upon them.

They should see that you are not doubtful about His Truth, are troubled with no misgivings as to its genuineness, its reality, its power, or its bearing on your personal history. They should see too that you are not ashamed of His cause, or slack about the spreading of His Kingdom, that you are ready to stand to your colours, and be staunch to your principles, even when your motives are misconstrued and your actions disliked.

There will be much to test this boldness just now when Christianity is said to be played out and a simple-hearted affiance in Christ is set down as a mark of ignorant weakness; when Science is not quite satisfied with Revelation, and cynicism is a power in society; when your equals are apt to regard you either as a fool or a fossil, and your rustics are not quite content to walk in the old paths. Face it all boldly. . Your stand will help others to stand.

(3) Then *be bold in your ministrations.*

Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all straightforwardness and plainness. Be ready to denounce abuses however inveterate, to come down upon vice however highly countenanced. You cannot speak too plainly about

certain evils which will be sure to crop up in your parishes, whilst you observe a wise discretion as to times and seasons. Always call wrong things by their right names. Spare no sin, whilst you show all possible desire that the sinning ones shall seek to be spared of God.

Be willing to suffer patiently, if need be, for the truth's sake. The endurance which proves your principle will often persuade to a change of life. Be strong then, and be bold, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But it must be a tempered boldness, tempered that is, on one side by justness, and on the other by meekness and tenderness. The infusion of justness tends to breadth of view. It prevents harshness. It is far removed from the spurious liberality of sentiment which is the great Gospel of the day, and which can see no evil in what is actually evil. And it is equally far removed from that hasty readiness to denounce in unmeasured terms all that, which though not actually evil, is set down as evil. Boldness so tempered is a great factor in influence, especially amongst your younger people. They are keen to detect any supposed want of charity, and only too apt to championise a man, or an opinion, or a practice which may rightly call for condemnation, if they get the idea that an injustice is being done, and that the scales are not evenly held. You cannot be too just in your boldness. Nor again too meek and tender. I grant that

this sounds like a combination of opposites. But I know that the most winning gentleness can coexist with the strictest truthfulness of dealing. Many a heart which would have hardened itself against a stern uncompromising call to surrender, has had to make this admission : "Thy gentleness, thy loving correction, has made me great." *Straightforward but tempered boldness is strength.*

(4) The next element that I should select as being productive of influence is that of *faithfulness*. It is a grace which has a wide spread of branch and twig.

It holds a twofold relation :—(1) *to Truth*, (2) *to Trust*.

(1) In its relation to Truth (in itself a Trust) it calls upon you as stewards of the mysteries of God to store it, to dispense it, to defend it. I have said enough on this head already. I will only remind you here that your faithfulness will be shown by an honest and continuous setting forth by life and lip of that Truth which comes from Christ, is Christ, leads to Christ, forms Christ within, and commends Christ to every sin-stricken and longing soul, as well as to every stedfast and devoted servant of God.

(2) I deal at present rather with the relation of Faithfulness to Trust in general, faithfulness to all the known duties, faithfulness in all the known relationships of the peculiar charge given to you, by your position, your powers, your calling in Christ.

Reliability is of the essence of all true influence, but there can be no reliability without faithfulness.

Whilst it is quite true in Lord Chesterfield's sense "that a minister ought not always to be had," yet it is also true in another sense that your people ought to know "where to have you" so as to depend upon you.

This cannot be without the strictest faithfulness in "littles," the most unswerving attention to details. The "pins" of the Tabernacle need to be looked after as well as the Ark, the Candlestick, or the Altars. Never mind the size of the pins. It is an old saying that "very weak things trouble very weak Christians," and small omissions, or negligences, or departures from accepted standards of right will trouble weak consciences.

If therefore you would be faithful, avoid all such things as slovenliness in the conduct of Divine Service; untidy vestments, irreverent attitude, senseless gabble, monotonous drawl. You are ministering *before* the Lord.

Avoid again all preference of rich to poor in the administration of Sacramental or Occasional Offices, paying no greater deference to the feelings of the one than to those of the other.

Beware of want of punctuality in keeping engagements. Be scrupulously on your guard against neglect, or carelessness, or partiality in matters relating to your parochial charities. Watch against any petulant dis-

play of temper when called upon to meet an unexpected or unwelcome summons to duty.

For these shortcomings and the like of them are apt to breed mistrust. They make people doubt about your sincerity, your earnestness, your fitness. Some, I know, may affect to speak of them as trivialities. But they are in reality amongst the "littles" which in their observance or non-observance go to make the "much" of the unfaithful or faithful character.

You cannot be too particular or too minute in your particularity as you come to the discharge of all your varied responsibility, the filling-out of every department of your work. A great deal more depends upon it than you may be willing to believe. If there is the slightest ground for the suspicion that you are selfishly inclined to spare yourself, or that you are indolent when you might be active, or that you are self-seeking in any position, or that you have an eye to money, or that you are needlessly close-fisted, or that you are aiming at by-ends when you start any plan or project, or that you content yourself with looking to the bare externals of your office, or are addicted to little worldlinesses, or little unrealities, or little departures from truth and fair-dealing—then all hope of a constraining influence is gone. Your power is proportioned to your faithfulness. *Stedfastness is strength.*

(5) I touch but lightly on another element of influence, viz. *geniality*. It adds to attractiveness by

adding to the “beauty” of the ministerial character, and so becomes a force.

If “joy” is the great Gospel command, encouragement of others through that joy is the great Gospel aim. You are not called upon to be sour-faced and sad, nor to go through the world as if the East wind had entire possession of you. There are too many ministerial icebergs about to make the sailing of some Christians altogether comfortable. Don’t add to the discomfort.

You need not be frivolous, nor mad-merry, nor clerical jesters or buffoons. But it will be good for your people to know that you can laugh sometimes, and that you can always meet them with a cheery greeting. Few things commend God’s truth more than a consistently cheerful Christianity. If you walk in the sunshine and reflect the shining some will come to enquire about the secret of that shining, and so about the Sun itself. *Geniality is strength.*

(6) I will only mention one more ingredient of effective ministerial influence, one more element in the “beauty” which attracts, and that is, *Loving Sympathy.*

Never was there a truer word than that of S. Augustine, “Ama, et fac quod vis.” For love is not only the law of Christ’s Kingdom, the great lesson in Christ’s School, it is also the very lever of humanity. It has been lately said that “loving sympathy exhibited in its perfection was one secondary cause of the ac-

ception which Christ's Gospel met with on its first appearance in the heathen world. Well says Macaulay, "It was before Deity taking a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the Cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the Academy, and the fasces of the lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust."

This same loving sympathy is the great want of our day. It is impossible to deny that our many agitations, political, social, theological, are calling up a spirit of great irritability and impatience, which again is leading to a spirit of great hardness in some places. Look at our masses. Separation of class from class is one of the marked features of our times, though perhaps to a less extent than was the case fifty years ago. For the social strata are still too strongly defined. And though interminglings do occur, they are more frequently the result of individual disruptive force, than of any aggregate harmonious upheaval. Self-interest, on the one hand, and tradition on the other, tend to keep up this separation.

It is here that loving sympathy is demanded to come in and throw a bridge over a rapidly widening gulf. Rough as some of your people may be you will find their hearts singularly open and responsive to it. Few can stand against an honest, earnest love. Tender

without compromise, trustful without weakness, active without obtrusiveness, it will surely work its way, to the removal of prejudice, the melting down of opposition, the subduing of sullenness and pent-up sense of supposed or actual wrong. Let it only be felt to be genuine and hearts will be won in spite of themselves.

And should it be that every here and there you have those to deal with who have come to doubt about God's truth and are *honestly* in opposition to it, do not neglect them, or be chilled towards them. Isolation only strengthens infidelity. You must seek them out. You must bring the dynamics of your loving sympathy to bear upon them. The more they see in you of the Spirit of the Master, the better able will you be to "seize and throw the giant of their doubts." Sympathy begets sympathy, confidence, regard. And the regard for one who aims at helping on the truth is followed by regard to that truth itself.

But what *form* is your loving sympathy to take?

It is not that very cheap form of feeling which ends in a bare pity or still barer relief of distress. Neither is it the busy proffer of assistance, much less a heartless affectation of interest.

It is that gracious quality which you must study in the Person, and store up from your experience of the sympathy of the Lord Jesus, and then bring to bear on the whole circle of your fellow-man's requirements.

This is loving sympathy, when you not only seek

out the wanderer, or comfort the mourner, or open your hand to the poor, but when you "consider" one another, and forbear, and plead for right and truth unobtrusively, meekly, patiently.

And this is loving sympathy, when you hold yourselves well in hand and in matters of controversy, of public and private contention, keep well within the limits of the law of love and endeavour to suppress self on the side of over-eagerness for success.

And this is loving sympathy, when Barnabas seeks Saul, and Aquila and Priscilla teach Apollos, and Paul reproves Peter with such truth and yet with such heart that he is a brother more beloved than ever.

Do make it your own in all its workings. No other force is half so forceful. None reaches so far within, so far into the depths of men's lives. You may try other methods of influence. The orthodoxy (as one says) which comes of the Church, the dogmatism which comes of man, the asperity which comes of the devil—they all fail. But love is of God, and leads to God. That faileth never. It is irresistible. *Sympathy, loving sympathy, is strength.*

Such then are some of the leading elements of Personal and Ministerial influence.

Others no doubt will occur to your own mind, such as wisdom and tact, hopefulness, spiritual unselfishness, enthusiasm, zeal, a single eye, simplicity of aim. I select these as constituting some of the chief forces

in ministerial character. For where there is godliness and consistency, a tempered boldness and a true faithfulness, a thorough geniality and a loving sympathy, there must be power.

"If you can only be earnest yet not gloomy, truthful yet not hard, firm yet not unbending, cheerful yet not light, courteous and good-humoured yet neither frivolous nor forward," you will have all the working principles of an attractive usefulness, a shadow without a blighting shade under which some may come and dwell.

II. I turn now to the *working* of this your Personal Influence, where rightly constituted.

You have it expressed in these words of the Prophet: "They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall grow (or blossom) as the corn, they shall revive as the vine."

From this Scripture as well as from the experience of life I gather that the power of Personal Influence is twofold:—(1) *Saving*, (2) *Formative*.

(1) It tells for the *salvation* of your people. "They that dwell under his shadow shall return." Speaking as you do, and will, to the eyes of the careless and impenitent by your lives, it happens not infrequently that the logic of the life tells more than the logic of the lips. It arrests, it stirs inquiry, it stimulates desire, it leads to anxiety, it urges to Christ. And thus more than one is brought to say, "I will go with you, for I

see that God is with you of a truth." "Your decision has helped mine, *I* am safe because *you* were stedfast." There is "return."

This however is not the point which I wish to labour now.

(2) I would rather draw your thoughts to the *formative power* of Personal Influence, or, to Personal Influence in its formative aspect, and consequent direct relation to your ministry.

You will, I am sure, feel this, that all is not done when souls are brought to Christ. Returning is much : growth and revival are more—the "book of your spiritual authorship" (if God permit such to be written) is not to be confined to the title-page. The "Epistles of Christ," if they are to be known and read of all men, must not only be "written by the finger of God," but also, "ministered" by you. There is to be the building up of the gold and silver, and precious stones, on the one foundation. The development of each member as it is added to the Christ-body, the equipment of the saints for their part in "the work of the ministry."

You have in short to aid in the formation of ripe Christian character, and this is very mainly carried out by the ἀναστροφή ἄνευ λόγου, "the conversation without the word."

Any conception of the Christian ministry which fails to regard it as a Divinely appointed institution

for the training of God's children falls short of the true idea. The rescuing of the *ἀρνια* must not push out the tending of the *προβάτια*.

If then you are thus solemnly called upon to make this character-formation your object you must carefully weigh two special considerations:—

(a) The kind of character which you should seek to develope.

(β) The working of your Personal Influence in the direction of that development.

(a) As to the first, I take it that you will all be agreed that the kind of Christians which you desire to see and to develope are Christ-like Christians, those who will be as the "corn" and as the "vine" sources of strength and refreshment to others.

There are not too many of this stamp in our parishes. Not a few are content with a surface-knowledge of God's Word, with a certain outward attention to devout habit and custom, with a readiness to assent to what is taught, with a painful want of clearness of thought which opens the door for all sorts of vagueness and viewiness. Or if there be more advance, more depth than this, do we not find either a too selfish contentment with spiritual privileges, apart from the discharge of spiritual duties, or a hasty, feverish, exhausting rush in a round of self-imposed work? And yet this is what passes muster with too many for practical Christianity and proper Christian character.

Surely you will want to see something better, something higher than this. And cannot such a character be formed? I say, advisedly, that it can. Notwithstanding all the adverse currents of doctrine and of life the Church and Ministry of the nineteenth century can be made to produce such growths.

There are, and we rejoice to know that there are, those in our Country Parishes who are diligent and loving readers of God's Word, making it the 'man of their counsel' and the strength and sweetness of their life of toil. There are those in lowly place who hold high converse with God, and in all holy humility maintain true fellowship with Him, to the sanctifying of their spirits, and the ennobling of their pursuits. There are those who bring all teaching to the touchstone of the Word, who "try the things that differ," who neither give way to a weak credulity nor a wilful blindness, who do not go headlong into the hot extremes of Salvationism, or get their hearts chilled in the polar regions of Negationism. There are those whose daily life is, as it were, an open Bible for others, and who "make their actions fine" by doing what they have to do "as unto the Lord." Yes, and there are those who take up work for God amongst their fellows in the truest spirit of self-consecration, and who wait on their ministry in spite of every possible discouragement and disappointment.

Can you not in humble dependence on the all-

powerful will and working of the Spirit of God, make these to be more ?

(β) You may do so, I conceive, if you will *only bear in mind what your Personal Influence has to say in the matter.*

It is a very solemn thought that the lives and characters of your people will be to a very considerable extent the reflection of your own.

Is not this suggested by the fact that in our Lord's Letters to the Seven Churches it is the Angels of the Churches who seem to be held responsible for what is amiss, or commended for the contrary ?

Apart from the fact that, as preachers, you may excite rather than instruct, or by disproportionate preaching bring about a deformed Christianity, this witness of an American divine (to whom I am indebted for not a few thoughts on the subject) remains true touching your lives.

He says this : " Defects in the habits and characters of private Christians come very much from the habits and examples of the ministers with whom they have to do. A worldly spirit in a minister makes worldlings ; an indolent one breeds habits of slothfulness....His prejudices become the prejudices of his people. His timidity, or slackness, or indecision, his habits of controversy, censoriousness and disputation, will repeat themselves, and lower the life of those who should have been lifted up."

"On the other hand the good and desirable qualities of a minister become, to a pleasant extent, those of his people."

This is, I say, a most true witness. Every man of God amongst you will be a helper of good in the people of Christ about him. Without being absolutely chameleons they will take their colour in no small degree from you. They will be honest through your honesty, firm through your firmness, truthful through your truthfulness, gracious by God's good hand upon them through the grace that is in you. From power of position, power of association, power of intercourse you will so stamp your character on theirs that you will be able to say with S. Paul, "Are ye not my work in the Lord?" You will "prove your own inspiration by your power to inspire." "You will make it felt that God is behind you."

"The best argument for the truth of Christianity is a true Christian." Nor only so. "It is a principle to be recognised that in the cure of souls there is larger fruit from influence than from effort." "Probably more are affected by our work, on the sides than in the front: more by oblique impressions than direct arguments and persuasions...Our personal work, again, may be traceable but a little way, but we may communicate impulses which reproduce themselves and spread in widening circles."

Every good influence therefore is potentially precious. You tell "magis affectu quam effectu."

"They that dwell under your shadow shall return, they shall grow...and revive..."

"Be then examples to believers in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity, in purity." "Be patterns to your flocks."

III. Such then being the elements, and such the operation, of your Personal Influence, it is but natural that you should ask *what aids you have for its development.*

As the outcome and the essence of that spiritual life which is Christ, it takes its rise primarily from union with Him.

All therefore that can make for the maintenance of that union must make for Influence.

But the chief Worker of that union is God the Holy Ghost. It is He therefore, who must be the principal agent in its development. He is the "upper spring" from whom all the "nether springs" draw their fulness and their force.

But He it is who sets Himself before you in the promise given here: "*I will be as the dew unto Israel.*" There is your supply, there is your sufficiency.

With Him, as, dewlike, He puts forth His penetrating but gentle operation, there is, for yourselves, all spiritual strength, fruitfulness, attractiveness.

With Him, there is for others, all spiritual usefulness, life, and growth. He alone can make your lives to be Christ-imparted, Christ-imparting, and through His sevenfold energy insure a sevenfold return of success.

But there are certain channels, certain "golden pipes" by which this "dew of blessing" is conveyed to your soul.

Your own experience will suggest not a few. The experience of others will add to their number. I content myself with laying stress on a very few. But these I commend with all my heart. They are those which have to do with your outward and inner life.

(1) You seek the "healthful Spirit of God's grace." Seek Him then by *diligent devotion to the work to which you are called*. "God gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him." You will have your times of discouragement and drooping, perhaps also of doubt. But when your spiritual growth is slack, when your graces seem to dwindle and their fruit fails to ripen, then try the effect of increased and self-denying effort for those entrusted to you, for the world at large.

Get yourself carried out of yourself in a spirit of self-surrendering obedience, and you will find your better self, the Christ that is in you, waxing stronger and stronger. Walking thus in the fear of the Lord you will walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

(2) Seek Him, next, as through Service and Sacra-

ment so in prayerful intercourse with your brethren in the ministry. The rightly conducted, rightly used Retreat or Quiet Day with its united prayer and intercession has often proved a very Pentecost to an earnestly-longing soul. "As they were all, with one accord, in one place, they were filled with the Spirit."

(3) Seek Him, again, in the practice of *devotional reading and meditation*. Use if you will such manuals, such biographies as may best suit your need. But do not get manual-bound. The Bible is ever the most practical aid to devotion, and the most profitable. As the work of God's Spirit, you honour Him when you honour it. And them that honour Him, He will honour by increase of grace.

(4) Seek Him above all *in Prayer*. "God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." That promise has never been falsified.

Only let your prayer be directly to and for the Spirit. Let it be intercessory, for in praying for others you get your lips opened more widely, and insure a double blessing. Let it be full of praise, for praise is a mannerly way of begging. Thanksgiving obtains the Spirit. It was when "the Levites were as one in praising and thanking the Lord, that then the house was filled with the glory of the Lord." As with that house so shall it be with your hearts. Let it be humble. For the dew is deposited most fully on the low ground, and lies longest on retired spots.

Seek Him thus by intercourse with your people, intercourse with your fellow-clergy, intercourse with your God. He will be as the dew unto you. And then shall you grow yourselves, whilst those who come under your influence shall grow also.

Here then I bring these words of brotherly counsel to a close. I do so with a very deep sense of unworthiness, unfitness, insufficiency. I can only say that I have endeavoured to deal honestly with your field, your methods of cultivation, yourselves.

For *you* I would pray, in the words of an eminent preacher two hundred years ago, "that the Spirit of the Lord may be redoubled upon you: that His word may prosper in your mouths: that it may run and be glorified: that you may be high in your communion with God, holy and unblamable in your walkings with God: that it may ever be still day with your souls: that you may live and die in the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost: and that when your sun is set, your glass out, your work over, your race run, you may rest in the everlasting arms of Divine Love."

For myself I would pray in the words of an older preacher, "Domine Deus! quaecunque dixi de tuo, agnoscant et tui: Si qua de meo, et tu ignosce et tui."

For each and all I would pray in the words of a preacher older still:—"Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And

let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

"Chief Shepherd of Thy chosen sheep  
From sin and death set free,  
Let every under-shepherd keep  
His eye intent on Thee.

With plenteous grace their hearts prepare  
To execute Thy will,  
Compassion, patience, love, and care,  
And faithfulness, and skill.

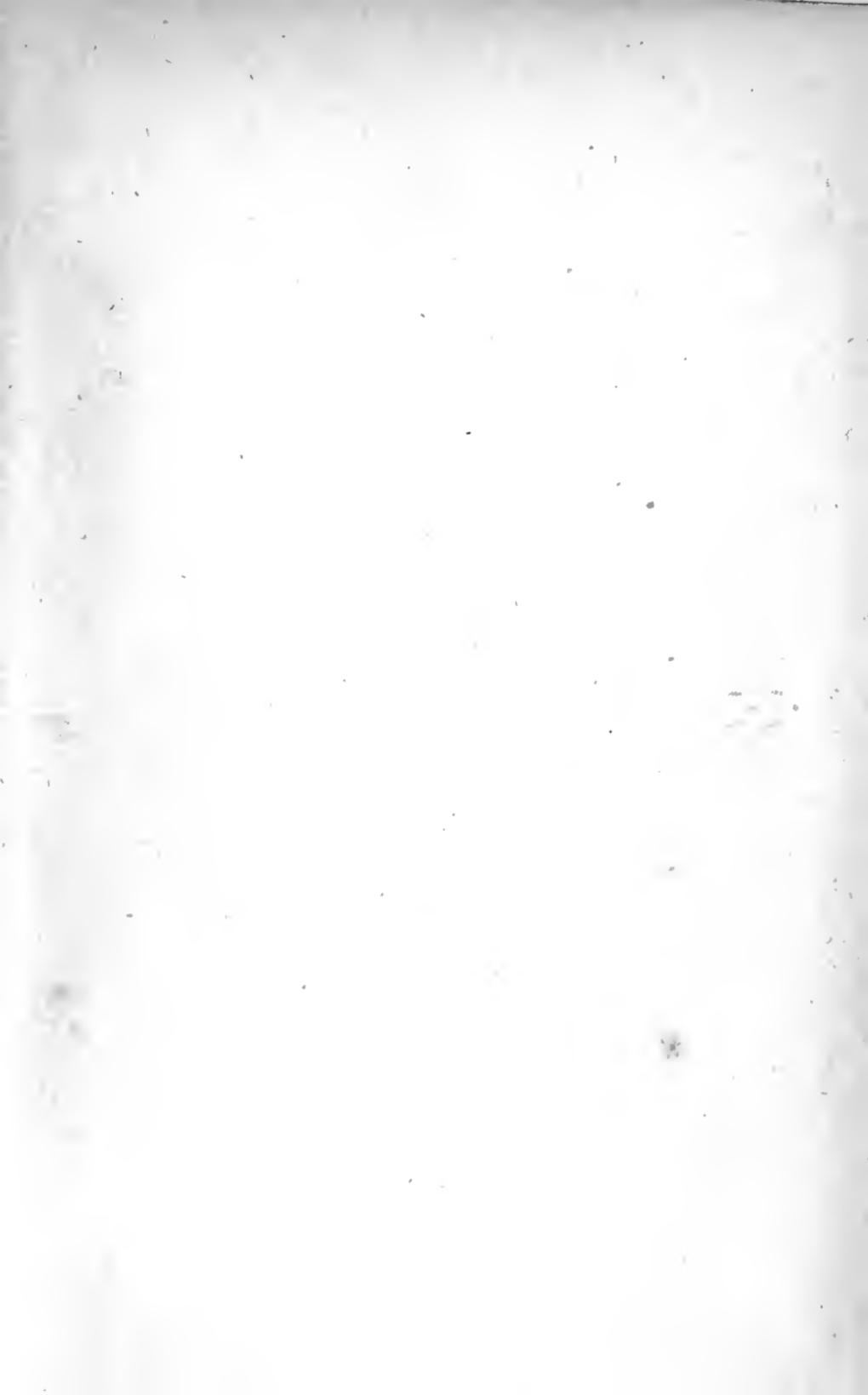
Inflame their minds with holy zeal  
Thy flock to feed and teach,  
And let them live and let them feel  
The sacred truths they preach.

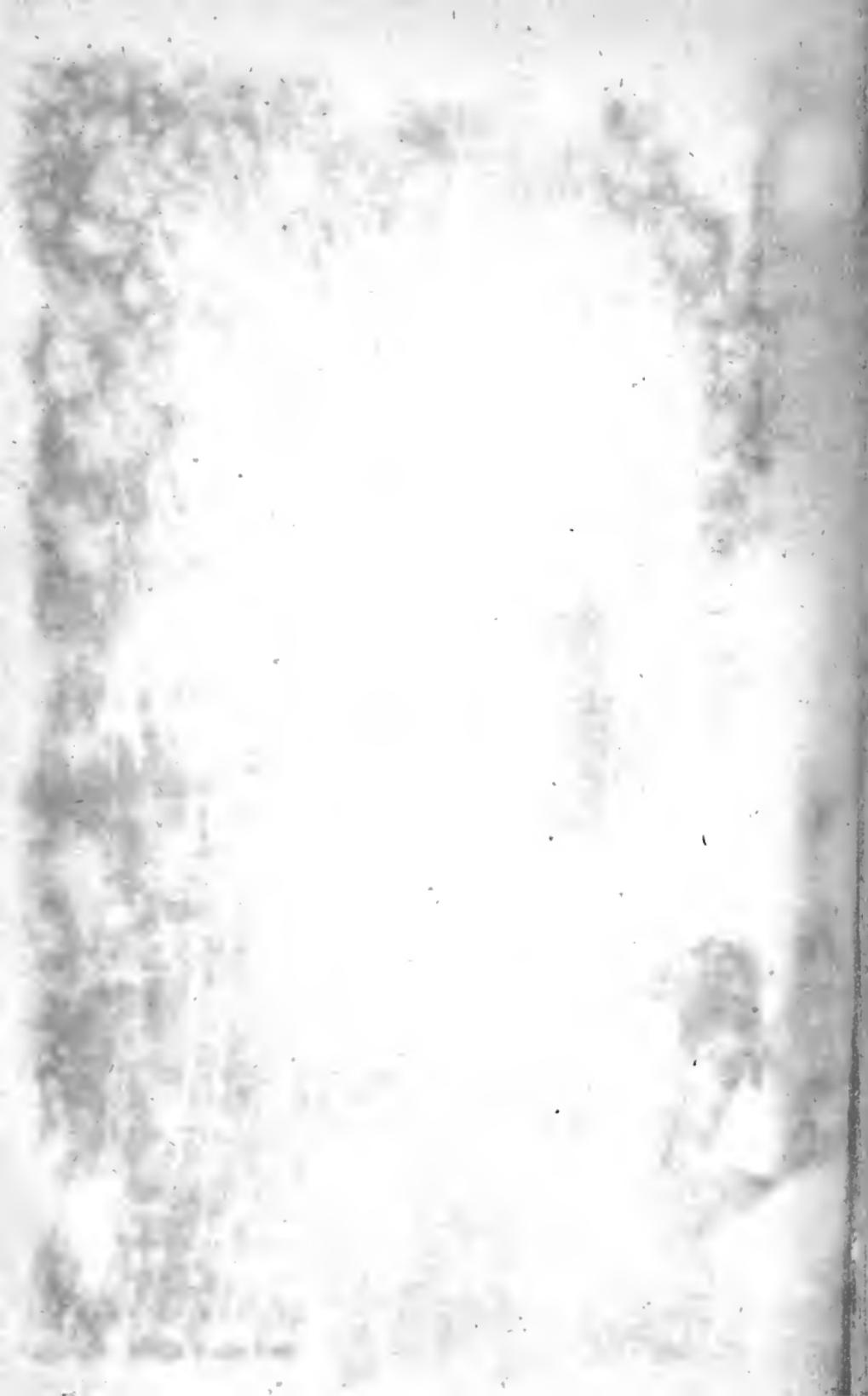
Oh, never let the flock complain  
That toys which fools amuse,  
Ambition, pleasure, praise, or gain,  
Debase the shepherd's views.

He that for these forbears to feed  
The sheep which Jesus loves,  
Whate'er he may profess or plead  
An idol-shepherd proves.

The sword of God shall break his arm,  
A blast shall blind his eye,  
His words shall have no power to warm,  
His gifts shall all grow dry.

O Lord, avert this heavy woe!  
Let all thy shepherds say,  
And grace and strength on each bestow  
To labour while 'tis day."





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